

THE MAGAZINE FOR THE SWISS ABROAD

S W I S S

REVIEW

AUGUST 2013 / NO. 4



The Federal Council has decreed an “energy turnaround” – what does this mean?

Giuliano Bignasca’s politics made a lasting impact on Ticino

Bastian Baker: a young man from French-speaking Switzerland on the world stage



SwissCommunity.org

The platform for the Swiss Abroad

“The SwissCommunity platform networks Swiss people worldwide via the web.”



Jean-François de Buren

Graphic designer and marketing strategy consultant
Swiss in the United States



“The beauty of Swiss-Community is the ability to easily share subjects you are passionate about.”



Florian Baccaud

Student
Swiss in France



“SwissCommunity? It’s a new way of linking Switzerland and the Swiss abroad: it’s the way forward.”



Chantal Kury

Licensed nursery-school teacher
Swiss in Egypt



“SwissCommunity is my gateway to my home country and to the world. The platform also offers a comprehensive service for the Swiss abroad.”

- ✓ Network with other Swiss abroad
- ✓ Keep up to date on relevant news and events
- ✓ Find an apartment – or the best fondue in town
- ✓ Discover Switzerland



Sign up for free membership

www.swisscommunity.org

SwissCommunity partners

Switzerland Tourism.
MySwitzerland.com



swissinfo.ch

SCHWEIZER NEWS - WELTWEIT

MEDIAparx



A future full of unknown factors

SWITZERLAND IS SLOWLY AWAKENING from a dream of unfettered prosperity." This comment recently appeared in the German weekly newspaper "Die Zeit". That raises the question of whether this verdict is an accurate reflection. Is there any truth in these words by journalist Peer Teuwsen, a very attentive and sympathetic observer of Switzerland? As we sometimes discover from angry letters, not all readers of "Swiss Review" appreciate references to problems and conflicts facing Switzerland, whether domestically, with neighbouring states or with more distant countries.

However, the fact that we were able to dream the "dream of unfettered prosperity" at all can be attributed to our democracy, most certainly our efficiency and also the stable conditions within our country – that means our laws, too, such as banking confidentiality. But banking confidentiality is becoming increasingly problematic for Switzerland. This is illustrated by the threatening posture being adopted by the USA towards Switzerland (report on page 16). American courts are preparing to take legal action, which may include charges of fraud, falsification of documents, money laundering, insider trading, bribery and the financing of terrorism.



The world experienced a nightmare on 11 March 2011 when an earthquake resulted in a tsunami and a disaster at the Fukushima nuclear power station in Japan. Shortly afterwards, the Federal Council announced that the Swiss government had decided to make fundamental changes to the country's energy policy. The term "energy turnaround" is now part of every politician's vocabulary. But what did the Federal Council actually mean by that? What does the "energy turnaround" signify for Switzerland and its future? In whose interests is this turnaround? Who is holding it back and does not want a shift in direction? And where will it lead us? Marc Lettau of our editorial team provides some answers in his feature article on page 8 onwards. He explains that the energy turnaround is not an abstract scenario but a process that will present challenges for each and every one of us.

Another futuristic idea, indeed quite an unconventional one, is currently being debated in Switzerland as well as in other European countries – the notion of an "unconditional basic income". This proposes that every individual should receive enough money from the state on which to live from the cradle to the grave – even if they do not work. Advocates and opponents of this fundamental reorganisation of society are found right across the political spectrum from the far left to the far right. This complicates the debate significantly. As signatures are already being collected for a popular initiative in Switzerland, Jürg Müller outlines the arguments for and against the proposal on page 17 onwards.

BARBARA ENGEL

4	Mailbag
5	Books: Politics at the theatre
6	Images: A masterpiece of engineering
8	Energy turnaround – what does the future hold?
12	Giuliano Bignasca changed Ticino
14	Voting – will compulsory military service be abolished?
16	Banks and politicians under pressure from the USA
17	Basic income – better off without working?
19	Literature series: Blaise Cendrars
20	Bastian Baker conquers the world
22	Where mountains tower – the Alpine Club's 150th anniversary
25	OSA advice
27	Notes from parliament
30	Echo

Cover image:

The Rhaetian railway in Grisons is one of the most spectacular stretches of railway in the world and is now a UNESCO world heritage site. The photo shows the Davos to Filisur stretch at the "Bärentritt"
Photo: Rhätische Bahn

IMPRINT: "Swiss Review", the magazine for the Swiss abroad, is in its 40th year of publication and is published in German, French, Italian, English and Spanish in 14 regional editions. It has a total circulation of 400,000, including 140,000 electronic copies. Regional news appears four times a year. The ordering parties are fully responsible for the content of advertisements and promotional inserts. This content does not necessarily represent the opinion of either the editorial office or the publisher. ■ **EDITORS:** Barbara Engel (BE), Editor-in-Chief; Marc Lettau (MUL); Jürg Müller (JM); Alain Wey (AW); Jean-François Lichtenstern (JFL), responsible for "Notes from Parliament", Relations with the Swiss Abroad, FDFA, 3003 Berne, Switzerland. Translation: CLS Communication AG ■ **LAYOUT:** Herzog Design, Zurich ■ **POSTAL ADDRESS:** Publisher, editorial office, advertising: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, 3006 Berne, Tel.: +41313566110, Fax: +41313566101, Postal account (Swiss National Giro): 30-6768-9. ■ **EMAIL:** revue@aso.ch ■ **PRINT:** Vogt-Schild Druck AG, 4552 Derendingen. ■ All Swiss abroad who are registered with a Swiss representation receive the magazine free of charge. Anyone else can subscribe to the magazine for an annual fee (Switzerland: CHF 30 / abroad: CHF 50). Subscribers are sent the magazine direct from Berne. ■ **INTERNET:** www.revue.ch ■ **Copy deadline for this edition:** 18.06.2013 ■ **CHANGE OF ADDRESS:** Please advise your local embassy or consulate. Do not write to the editorial office in Berne.



printed in
switzerland

Second-class Swiss citizens

We Swiss abroad are clearly treated as second-class citizens. Not just in health insurance but also for driving licences, the courts and the banks. I am experiencing this now at the age of 77 after settling in Thailand with my Thai partner when I was 75. This comes after 60 years of political involvement, 18 years of which as a mayor.

ARMIN THÜRIG,
BANCHANG, THAILAND

Clear discrimination

It is a clear case of discrimination when Swiss abroad within the EU can join the state health insurance scheme while those of us in the rest of the world cannot. The voting potential of this group is obviously not important enough to the political parties. They prefer to focus

on issues that everyone is talking about in Switzerland, such as more rights for gays and lesbians, more money for asylum seekers and an individual support team for every prison inmate. The parties use these issues to present themselves in the best light ahead of the next elections. Swiss abroad who are no longer able to get health insurance cover are of no interest to these people. It makes no difference if we Swiss abroad have served our country up to the age of 65! I have decided to use all democratic means available to rectify this injustice.

ROLF BÜRGE,
KHUN HAN, THAILAND

Strange expression

I read the interview with George Andrey in "Swiss Review" with great interest. I stumbled over the expression

"untergebene und alliierte Gebiet" (subject and allied territories), which appears several times. I have never heard of these territories before. It is over 40 years since I was at school in Switzerland. Should this strange name perhaps be "gemeine Herrschaften und zugewandte Orte"? This would exculpate me and leave the blame with those responsible for translation and editing.

ROLAND MARTI, GERMANY

Swiss government must offer compensation

Thank you for publishing this article about home care children in the "Swiss Review". It is good to know that such subjects are being brought to light rather than continuing to keep everyone in ignorance that such things happened. For me, Switzerland is not just "Swiss

cheese and chocolate" but also stands for transparency and concern for other people. Hopefully the Swiss government will put their money where their mouth is and offer monetary compensation as well to these victims.

MARY BRONNIMANN,
DENVER, USA

Even in squeaky-clean Switzerland

I am horrified at what happened to those children, I know it happened in similar ways in Australia by the so-called Christian churches and society, but I never believed that in squeaky-clean Switzerland such a thing could happen. With a little research it seems that all over the world that's what people thought children on the fringe of society deserved till the 1980s. Thank



We'll take you to Switzerland at the click of a mouse.

Information. News. Background reports. Analysis. From Switzerland, about Switzerland. Multimedia, interactive and up to date in 9 languages. swissinfo.ch

swissinfo.ch
SWISS NEWS, WORLD WIDE

www.ilg-mietauto.ch

200 Autos, 40 Modelle, z.B 1 Monat inkl. Frei Kilometer
Dacia Sandero 1.2, Fr. 700.-
Dacia Logan 1.6, Fr. 900.-



Ilgauto ag, 8500 Frauenfeld
Tel 0041 52 7203060

International Health Insurance

Comprehensive, worldwide cover and free choice of doctor and hospital

SIP SWISS INSURANCE PARTNERS®

Tel. +41 44 266 22 66
info@sip.ch

Competence. Experience. Independent Advice.

www.sip.ch



Vorsorgen in Schweizer Franken.

Agentur Auslandschweizer
Stefan Böni, Winkelstrasse 1, CH-8706 Meilen
+41 44 925 39 39, www.swisslife.ch/aso

goodness life has finally changed.

HELEN PYE,
MACLEAN, AUSTRALIA

Your article revived my worst nightmares...

I'm 68 years old and reading about the experiences of others like me brought back the worst memories from my childhood. I also went through all this and worse. It now all comes flooding back, the abuse, torment and slavery I was subjected to by farmers and the government. For the first time in years I couldn't sleep after reading this, crying like a baby.

P. S. CALGARY, CANADA

Renewing a Swiss passport

Living in the paradise that is Hawaii is a dream. Unfortunately, renewing a Swiss passport is not such a wonderful ex-

perience. The Hawaiian consulate does not have a biometric machine. So, I asked how other countries overcome this problem. There is a simple solution – a company in Honolulu, which has the equipment required, records the biometric data and sends it in a sealed envelope to the respective embassies. Those of Canada, Australia and South Africa, for example.

Only, the Swiss consulate general does not accept this. I was therefore forced to fly to San Francisco – 3,841 kilometres for a five-minute procedure. Renewing my passport cost me a 1,900-dollar plane ticket, 500 dollars for two days off work unpaid and 100 dollars for the hotel. The most expensive five minutes of my life.

EDITH TRUCKENBROD,
HONOLULU, HAWAII, USA

International Health Insurance

- Based on Swiss standards
- Lifelong private medical treatment
- Worldwide free choice of doctor and clinic

 Especially for Swiss citizens abroad:
Possibility of a free vesting without a new medical examination!
Exclusively for you and only at ASN

Contact us!
Tel: +41 (0)43 399 89 89
www.asn.ch

ASN AG
Bederstrasse 51
CH-8027 Zurich
info@asn.ch

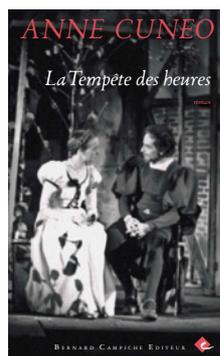


Resistance at Zurich's theatre

ANNE CUNEO, AN AUTHOR WHO LIVES IN GENEVA AND ZURICH, continually enthralled the Swiss public with her historical novels. Her book about "Zaida", the English aristocrat who became one of the first women to study medicine in Zurich in the 19th century, became a bestseller in both French-speaking and German-speaking Switzerland. The 76-year-old writer has now turned her attention to a chapter in Swiss history. While historians may be familiar with the episode, it otherwise receives little mention. The novel's title is "La Tempête des heures". It centres on the Zurich Playhouse, which became a place of refuge for the persecuted and a place of intellectual resistance during the early years of the war as the last free theatre in the German-speaking world.

While Zurich's residents were increasingly fleeing to relatives in the Bernese Oberland and central Switzerland, the Pfauenbühne theatre staged "Faust II" in spring 1940 under the shadow of great peril. The play is regarded as a very difficult one even under normal circumstances, posing an enormous challenge to the actors, director and stage crew. Staging the play in Zurich at a time of war turned out to be an incredible feat. Everything proved complicated, from the paint for the scenery to the materials for the costumes. In contrast to "Faust I", good ultimately prevails in "Faust II". The performance sent a clear message of resistance to Berlin, which was staging a Nazi interpretation of "Faust I" at almost exactly the same time.

But this is not what the novel is about. That would have been far too mundane for Anne Cuneo. She is not interested in theory but rather in the destiny of the individual. So, she recounts the story of the Zurich Playhouse during wartime from the perspective of a young Polish Jew, Ella Berg, who has managed to escape to Switzerland. Ella Berg is a fictional character and an archetype. A lot of young women arrived in Switzerland as refugees during the

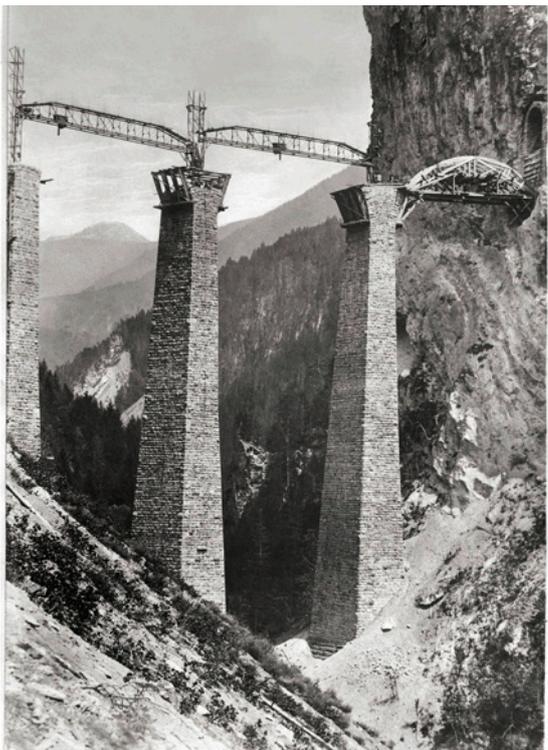
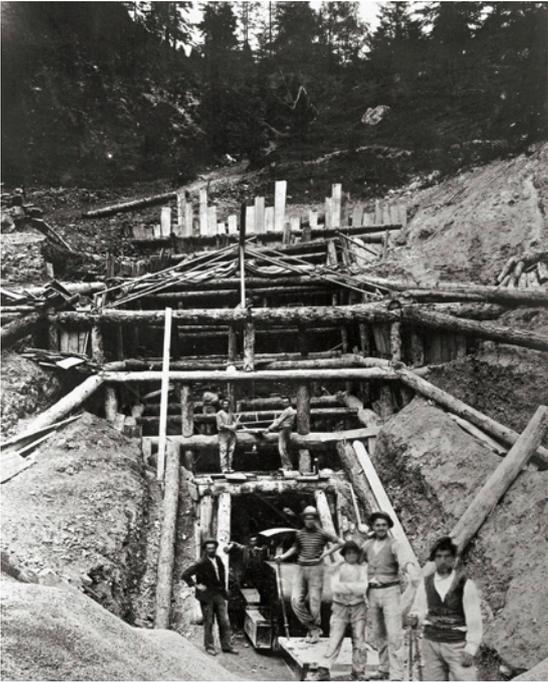


war years and, like her, for many the only way to remain there was to marry a Swiss man. Ella Berg becomes the theatre dogsbody. Through her we experience the trauma of displacement and devastation. Her fate reveals that the notion of a Switzerland spared certainly did not apply to everyone as there were also victims in Switzerland. Through her we also become acquainted with the great actors and directors who made the Zurich Playhouse one of the best in the German-speaking world

for decades in the post-war period. They include Anne-Marie Blanc, Maria Becker, Therese Giehse, Heinrich Gretler, Leopold Lindtberg, Ettore Cella, Ernst Ginsberg and Wolfgang Langhoff. Anne Cuneo's writing reveals great attention to detail and a declared desire to remain true to the facts of history. "I don't engineer the story. It has to be right," she explains. It is little wonder then that when you finish reading "La Tempête des heures" you feel as though you have experienced a bygone era and really learned something.

SERAINA GROSS

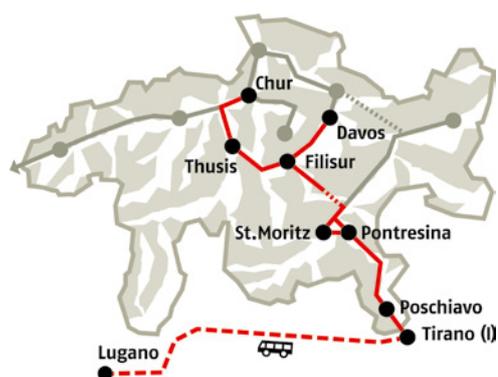
Anne Cuneo, "La Tempête des heures"; Edition Bernard Campiche, Orbe, 2013, 295 pages. The book will appear in German at the Frankfurt Book Fair in October. It will be published by Bilger Verlag Zurich under the title "Schon geht der Wald in Flammen auf".



A masterpiece of engineering

The stretch of the Rhaetian Railway line across the Albula mountain range, which was officially opened in 1903, is one of the most spectacular railway routes in the world and a masterpiece of engineering. 55 viaducts and 33 tunnels lie between Thusis in the Rhine valley and St. Moritz in the Engadine. It was constructed by Friedrich Hennings from Kiel in northern Germany and Robert Moser from Zurich. They were regarded as the best railway engineers of their time. Prior to the construction of the





railway, the journey from Chur through the Julier Pass to the Engadine took around 14 hours – today it takes just two by train. Together with the extension through the Bernina Pass to Val Poschiavo and on to Tirano in Italy, this stretch of railway was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2008. It became the third railway in the world to obtain this status alongside parts of the Mountain Railways of India and the Semmering route in Austria.

www.rhb.ch; www.bahnmuseum-albula.ch



Switzerland plans its energy policy for a post-nuclear future

Fukushima has caused a fundamental shift in Switzerland's energy policy. The Federal Council decided to withdraw from nuclear energy in the wake of the disaster and is now pressing for a complete change of direction. But what does the expression "energy turnaround" so often heard today actually mean? Who wants to turn and to where?

By Marc Lettau



14 March 2011: Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard outlines the government's energy turnaround plans to the media in the parliament building

After the seemingly never-ending cold and wet winter weather, the sunshine finally appeared in Switzerland at the end of May. But the good weather had hardly settled before storm clouds gathered over the federal capital, Berne. There was a ferocious debate over the service life of Switzerland's nuclear power stations in the National Council in June. Should the nuclear power plants, all of which are somewhat outmoded, be allowed to operate indefinitely provided constant investment is made in their safety? Or should they have an officially decreed decommissioning date when they will be shut down definitively?

The National Council's Energy Committee proposes a maximum duration of 50 years. The Greens consider that to be excessive. They want the nuclear power stations to be closed down within no more than 45 years. They also called for this in a popular initiative submitted in 2012. The predominantly conservative National Council members, taking account of the concerns of the nuclear power plant operators, are instead pushing to avoid the stipulation of a decommissioning date as safety might be neglected in the final years of operation. The plants would become more hazardous rather than safer.

The row has not yet been settled as the National Council has deferred its decision un-

til later in the year. The debate is nevertheless remarkable. Instead of haggling over when and where new nuclear power stations would be built, as was still the case several years ago, only nuclear decommissioning is now on the agenda. The nuclear power plants in operation today are therefore obsolescent models. What has happened?

The shock announcement was made on 14 March 2011. On that Monday, the Energy Minister, Doris Leuthard (CVP), turned Swiss energy policy upside down with a short statement. The Federal Councillor announced that Switzerland would undertake a "well-structured" withdrawal from nuclear power because "the safety and wellbeing of the Swiss people was paramount". The stark impact of the statement was that applications already submitted for permission to construct two new nuclear power plants in Switzerland were unceremoniously put on ice. With their propensity for brevity, the media pointed out that an "energy turnaround" was on the way.

The earth shook, confidence was shattered

There is little doubt as to what led the Energy Minister to embark upon a new course that Monday morning. It was the terrible events

that occurred three days before Leuthard's announcement and which had etched themselves into the consciousness of the global community. In short, an earthquake occurred at 2.46 p.m. on 11 March 2011 in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of the Japanese region of Tohoku. The rise and fall of the tectonic plates triggered a powerful tsunami that hit the Japanese mainland just under an hour later killing at least 16,000 people. The barely describable human tragedy was accompanied by one of the greatest technological catastrophes of the modern age – the violent earthquake and the subsequent tsunami hit the six nuclear reactors of Fukushima Daiichi. The operator Tepco was unable to shut down the reactors in a controlled manner amid the chaos of devastation. The post-cooling system in the plants that had been shut down failed to function. There were explosions in four reactors and a core meltdown in three. Large amounts of radioactive substances entered the atmosphere and the sea. Japan's main island moved two metres to the east as a result of the tremors. The Earth's mass distribution changed so much that since then the Earth has been turning slightly more quickly. In Berne, too.

Energy policy with climatic objectives

Since the shock of Fukushima, the federal authorities have picked up the pace of work on the fundamental reorganisation of Swiss energy policy. The tool being deployed is entitled "Energy Strategy 2050". This aims to reduce energy and power consumption per person, which is still rising steadily. It outlines how environmentally damaging emissions are to be cut significantly by 2050. This makes it clear that the strategy goes far beyond withdrawal from nuclear energy and the reorganisation of power supply – it seeks to bring the abandonment of nuclear power and climate protection under one umbrella. However, Switzerland must reduce its dependence on crude oil to achieve this. Fossil fuels still meet around three quarters of the nation's energy requirements. The remaining quarter is pri-

marily covered by electricity, around 40% of which is nuclear power. In order to achieve the objective set out, federal government experts recommend making much more efficient usage of power on the one hand and generating significantly more electricity from solar and wind plants on the other. Faster and simpler authorisation procedures are proposed, and an upgrading and expansion of the power grids is being called for. A further recommendation is the use of gas-fired power plants to secure power supply over the medium term. Parliament is likely to discuss and evaluate this extensive set of measures, which will require the amendment of various laws, before the end of this year.

“Planned-economy attitudes”

Judgements are already being formed. Environmental campaigners protest that as long as no date is set for the decommissioning of the existing five nuclear power stations (Beznau I, Beznau II, Gösgen, Mühleberg, Leibstadt) no impetus can be generated for a genuine energy turnaround. In contrast, many business representatives claim that the Federal Council is pursuing an “unrealistic” energy policy. Industry is nevertheless excited about the employment opportunities that could be created through the expansion of renewable energies. The most optimistic estimates indicate up to 100,000 additional jobs. The mood in export-oriented sectors, however, is much more downbeat. They fear that increasing energy costs at home might damage their competitiveness abroad. The industry association Swissmem, which represents the interests of the mechanical, electrical and metal industries, has levelled criticism at the Federal Council for overestimating the opportunities for improving energy efficiency and more intensive deployment of alternative, renewable sources of energy. Jean-Philippe Kohl, head of the economic policy unit at Swissmem, even points to “planned-economy attitudes” and “overoptimistic faith in feasibility”. He says the fact that many things must happen concurrently for fundamental restructuring of the energy system to occur has been overlooked in the government’s haste – the investment in new technologies, the extension of the grids, better integration into the European power market and the construction of new storage facilities because the power produced at solar and wind power plants fluctuates greatly in contrast to that from nuclear power. Kohl believes the Federal Council’s “Energy

Strategy 2050” will be absolutely fundamental. He remarks: “For electricity, in particular, this means a rejection of central power production in favour of a decentralised system involving a high degree of state intervention.” He also underlines that the export-oriented sectors are not opposed to a more sustainable energy supply but are urging a reorganisation

and the Energy Minister has made an extremely important contribution, he says. “She understands the issue. She correctly made the withdrawal from nuclear power into an energy turnaround.” Buri welcomes the fact that Leuthard is fostering a debate on overall energy consumption. However, he believes that the abandonment of nuclear power is un-



Beznau nuclear power plant, the oldest reactor in the world, is still in operation

of energy and climate policy that is in step with the international community. The idea that Switzerland must “set a good example” is “extremely naïve”. Swissmem and other business federations are sceptical about the increase in subsidies to promote alternative, sustainable sources of energy: “We fear that Switzerland will become shackled to a policy of subsidisation.”

“Effectively a sham withdrawal”

Jürg Buri, the managing director of the Swiss Energy Foundation (SES), represents a completely different position. The foundation, which has been campaigning for an “intelligent, ecological and equitable energy policy” since 1976 and supports the model of the 2000-watt society (see text below), is following current developments with some satisfaction, according to Buri. More efficient energy usage, the abandonment of nuclear power, reduction of dependence on limited fossil fuels and the much more intensive deployment of alternative, sustainable sources of energy – these objectives from the “Energy Strategy 2050” sound as though they might have been copied directly from an SES paper. Though Buri does have reservations. The general direction being pursued with the energy turnaround is indeed the right way forward

fortunately half-hearted: “The publicised structured withdrawal is effectively a sham withdrawal. No new nuclear power stations are being built but the current operators instead want to continue running their existing plants for much longer.” Like many other environmental organisations, the SES is therefore pressing for clear decommissioning dates for the outmoded nuclear power plants. Constantly upgrading outdated facilities will result in the absurd situation of Switzerland refraining from constructing new nuclear power stations on safety grounds but incurring increasingly greater safety risks by continuing to operate “dilapidated” plants than it would by building new ones.

Divided camp

However, heated disputes are also taking place within this political and ideological camp. Many environmental campaigners are seeking to drive forward but at the same time hold back the energy turnaround. They generally support the turnaround but are opposed to new pressures being placed on nature, water, the countryside, urban landscapes and the climate. For example, they clearly consider electricity from hydropower to have a natural aura. However, sacrificing the last nearly natural rivers to produce po-



A glimpse into the future: rooftop solar panels in Schiers (Grisons), countryside dotted with wind turbines in southern Germany, and the façades of older buildings newly clad with solar panelling, as at the Sihlweid building project in Zurich



wer contradicts their principles of protection. The most radical among them are consequently calling for the energy turnaround to focus solely on reductions in consumption.

Business associations are also in disagreement. *Swissmem* and *Economiesuisse*, Switzerland's largest business federation, take a highly critical view of the "Energy Strategy 2050". However, *Swisscleantech*, a green business association, has stirred up the debate by strongly advocating resource-efficient and low-emission economic activity with no strings attached.

An inconspicuous energy lobby

The major energy companies, such as *Alpiq*, *Axpo* and *BKW*, are adopting a relatively low-key approach. They are having difficulty in extricating themselves from the paralysis caused by the Fukushima tragedy.

Heinz Karrer, CEO of *Axpo Holding*, who until Fukushima was a much quoted, vociferous advocate of new nuclear power stations, has remained conspicuously inconspicuous. He restricts himself to warning against setting the course of the agenda too hastily. The energy turnaround is not a sprint: "We would tire long before the finishing line comes into sight," he observes. The reticence of the major energy companies is explained by the fact that they are the potential losers in the turnaround. If hundreds of thousands of people were to one day actually install solar panels on the roofs of their houses and feed decently generated power into the grid, they would find themselves in a quandary. It would no longer be the major companies that would be the market-defining players, but all the small electricity plants which still had direct customer

contact. In contrast, the large companies would find themselves sitting on their gigantic infrastructures.

Struggle for power and monopoly

Political observers, such as the Zurich-based economist and publicist Christoph Zollinger, rub salt into this wound. He can see no major technical obstacles in the way of the energy turnaround. He regards the real hurdles as the psychological block and the power struggle behind the scenes. If an entire nation were to set about producing its own energy – such as with solar rooftop systems – the role and influence of the existing energy suppliers would change dramatically. Zollinger remarks: "The row over the future of energy is also a battle for emoluments, vested rights, power and monopoly. The energy turnaround consti-

SWISS SOLUTIONS TO AN IRREPRESSIBLE DEMAND FOR ENERGY

Swiss people's perspective on the issue of energy is changing. When the OPEC countries restricted oil production during the 1973 oil crisis, the main concern was price. Strict speed limits and Sunday driving bans were enforced in Switzerland. This did nothing to change energy costs that had climbed by 70%. In contrast, many environmental organisations today complain that energy prices are so low that wastage can scarcely be stemmed. The constantly rising demand for energy is also speeding up climate change. The main issue is increasingly the quantity consumed.

Since the 1990s, the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich has been carrying out think-tank work on how human energy consumption can be reduced to sustainable levels. It has developed the model of a 2000-watt society. The basic concept is that the energy requirements of each individual cannot exceed an average output of 2000 watts if global energy consumption and the

emission of environmentally damaging greenhouse gases are to be reduced to an acceptable level. On an annual basis, this means that 17,500 kilowatt hours (kWh) should meet every individual's requirements for heating, mobility and food. In order to achieve this objective, Switzerland would have to turn the clock back by 50 years in terms of energy consumption to return to the levels of 1960.

The researchers at the Federal Institute of Technology are not calling for austerity. They are endeavouring to find technological solutions to maintain current living standards but with much lower energy consumption. The 2000-watt-society model is already having an impact in Switzerland's housing sector. New buildings are today generally well-insulated and have very low energy requirements for heating, cooling and air-conditioning. The market shares of highly energy-efficient devices and low-consumption cars are also increasing. However, because new – en-



tutes a monumental reorganisation of our society.”

A bottom-up turnaround

Anyone just following the political debate at national level might come to the conclusion that the energy turnaround in Switzerland is actually “a huge chest”, as Federal Councillor Leuthard put it, but one that, for the moment, is full of nothing but planned measures. This impression is deceiving as cities and larger urban communes, in particular, are already working towards a new future. They are implementing the turnaround. The commune of Payerne (canton of Vaud) is currently planning to construct Switzerland’s largest solar facility. 100,000 square metres of solar panelling is being installed on the rooftops. The solar-generated power is expected to meet the demand of all of the

town’s 9,500 inhabitants. Payerne is no exceptional case either, as many communes are currently calculating how much sun shines on their rooftops. Köniz, a suburb of Berne, concluded after evaluating all its rooftops that the amount of usable solar energy shining on its roofs corresponds exactly to the power consumption of its 40,000 residents. Rita Haudenschild, director of environmental affairs in Köniz, believes that federal government’s estimates of the potential of solar power set out in its energy strategy are “far too conservative” as well over 20% of power can be generated from solar sources.

Elsewhere, it is not politicians but rather smaller power plants that are setting the pace. They are upgrading their local power networks so that more private producers can feed electricity into the grid without any technical problems. This is the key technical require-

ment for promoting the decentralised, sustainable generation of energy. It is also the smaller power plants that are seeking to address consumer concerns over unaffordable electricity bills. Peter Lehmann, an energy expert and CEO of the regional energy supplier for Wohlten in the “nuclear canton” of Aargau, argues that the Swiss people can afford even a dramatic turnaround – a power supply system consisting exclusively of renewable sources. He remarks: “Assuming that each individual will consume 25% less power by 2050 than at present thanks to more efficient technology, the additional costs for an average four-person household would amount to around 400 Swiss francs a year. This shows that the additional costs are manageable and can most certainly be financed.”

MARC LETTAU is an editor with the “Swiss Review”

energy-consuming – needs are constantly being created, overall energy consumption per capita is still rising.

The Swiss are therefore still a long way off achieving a sustainable lifestyle. Primary energy requirements currently stand at 6,300 watts per person, while annual CO₂ emissions amount to around nine tonnes per person. The sustainability target is a maximum of one tonne of CO₂ per person. The “Energy Strategy 2050” presented by the Federal Council should nevertheless significantly reduce CO₂ emissions and cut energy consumption to around 4,000 watts.

Does the sustainable 2000-watt society remain a utopic dream despite the energy turnaround? The Swiss Federal Laboratories for Materials Science and Technology (Empa) in Dübendorf presented sobering study results in May. Only around 2% of Swiss people are currently meeting the objectives of the 2000-watt society. What the Empa researchers discovered was that while lower energy consumption is achievable, few people reach the low CO₂ emissions tar-

geted. The problem is not just high energy consumption but the fact that a very large share of energy requirements is still being met with crude oil. Head of Research Dominic A. Notter reveals: “The eating behaviour alone of those surveyed produces almost a tonne of CO₂ per person annually.” Notter does not support the notion that everything can be put back on track without living standards being affected: “We must adopt a more frugal approach.”

Individual footprints

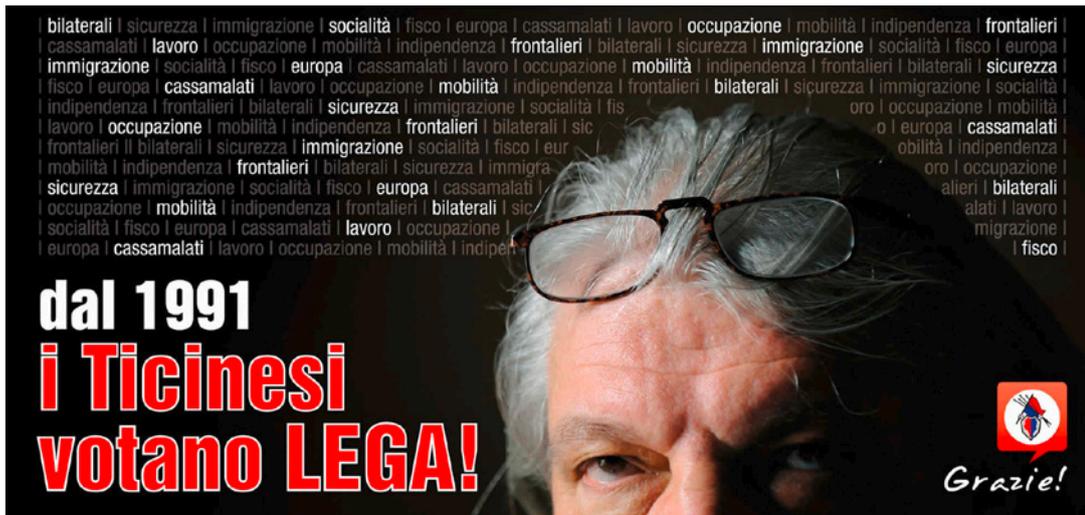
But what does a frugal approach mean? Few people are able to quantify their “energy requirements”. However, that is also changing given the increasing number of devices for calculating a person’s own environmental footprint (example: www.ecospeed.ch). This acid test will, of course, show that most people have a long way to go before they can have a clear conscience. (mul)

<http://www.energiestiftung.ch>; <http://www.swisscleantech.ch>;
<http://www.ecospeed.ch>; <http://www.2000watt.ch>; <http://www.energybox.ch>

“He changed Ticino without ever having governed it”

Giuliano Bignasca was a key figure in the politics of Ticino for 22 years as the founder of the free newspaper “Mattino della Domenica”, co-founder and life president of the protest movement “Lega dei Ticinesi” and a National Councillor. He completely unsettled the established parties – the CVP and FDP, which had divided up power, influence and office between themselves for decades.

By Veronica Alippi



The Lega dei Ticinesi's poster to mark its 20th anniversary and Giuliano Bignasca (pictured right) with Marco Borradori, Lugano's new mayor, taken in December 2012

A photograph taken in partial shade. An artful incidence of light highlights the upper part of the face – a for once solemn expression and, of course, a pair of glasses perched on the white hair. This was the image on the poster that adorned the streets of the canton of Ticino at the beginning of 2011 to mark the 20th anniversary of the Lega dei Ticinesi. The figure featured on the poster was Giuliano Bignasca, property entrepreneur and party founder. Bignasca – “the dwarf”, as he was known throughout Ticino – was not just the unmistakable figurehead of the Lega but also its founder, leader, life president and the heart and soul of the party. The Lega was Bignasca, and Bignasca was the Lega.

Questions were raised as to what would become of this movement upon news of his death from a heart attack in the early hours of 7 March this year. It had trounced the opposition on 10 April 2011, becoming the strongest party in Ticino's government with two out of five seats. The answer emerged several weeks after Bignasca's death. The Lega became the most powerful party in Lugano, the canton's major city, and secured the office of city president for Marco Borradori.

The “Lega dei Ticinesi” was officially founded on 17 January 1991. Its establish-

ment was preceded by the launch of the free newspaper “Mattino della Domenica” in March 1990. Bignasca set up the “Mattino” with clear political intentions. He had been cut out of a business deal for the purchase of some SBB property and had resolved to fight against political patronage in Ticino and the power of the traditional parties. The “Mattino” was an immediate hit having a major impact on Ticino's media and publishing scene.

Forecasts and reality

History repeated itself with the Lega – an overnight success and a huge impact. During its first election campaign in spring 1991, the party won 12 of 90 seats in Ticino's parliament and only just missed out on entering the government. At the federal elections in October, it took two out of eight Ticino seats in the National Council and one seat in the Council of States. Politics in Ticino was rocked to its foundations. Many observers and politicians predicted that such a shock outcome would not be repeated. It was deemed “a protest vote, a temporary phenomenon that would last for one legislative term and then disappear without trace”. However, events did not turn out that way. The Lega has gone through

highs and lows but has established itself as a permanent part of Ticino's political landscape and has shaped, modelled and fundamentally changed the canton over the past 20 years. It has always remained true to itself, if not always in terms of policy at least in what it stands for.

The Lega has actually never had an ideological foundation. Giuliano Bignasca, who always set the party's political agenda, primarily pursued his own objectives. In particular, he gunned for the establishment, the political parties, the federal capital of Berne and Europe. This approach did not change over the years. The unusual blend of liberalism and social mindedness that influenced Bignasca's thinking did not change either. This focused on lower taxation and less bureaucracy on the one hand and more support for citizens in need and taking on the health insurance schemes on the other.

A keen instinct for people's concerns

Bignasca's political opponents constantly accused him of duplicity and pointed to contradictions in his policies, especially to do with taxation and finance. However, such paradoxes clearly appealed to voters, especially those who wanted to express

their dissatisfaction with traditional politics and still do. It also won support among voters who sought change because they believed it was necessary to overcome economic, social and personal challenges.

Bignasca's policies were often discredited as being populist and politically naïve. However, as a "political animal" he had a keen instinct for common concerns and the needs



of the inhabitants of Ticino, whom he called "la gente" (the people). He often came up with simple, even trivial, ideas but they proved effective. The "Mattino", which was practically the official party mouthpiece, publicised its slogans and maxims, highlighted who its enemies were, and mocked and insulted its victims. It often used pejorative language and photo montages that provoked outrage. Bignasca was accused in many quarters of making politics more savage. He was denounced on countless occasions for slander and libel. He was subjected to several court judgements, which he tended to ignore. The remarks made by the Lega's representatives are usually crude, often disrespectful and frequently xenophobic. This may have contributed to the movement's success. It is certainly true that Bignasca had a good instinct for identifying which issues concerned the people of Ticino and what they felt threatened by, such as the phenomenal rise in the number of cross-border workers.

An inseparable pair

Genuinely democratic structures have never existed within the Lega. Bignasca made decisions and announced them in the "Mattino" without involving his members

of government or parliamentarians. This also led to rows that were soon followed by impassioned reconciliations. The life president had an ambivalent relationship with his main supporters. His most important ally was Marco Borradori, a member of the cantonal council for 18 years and today mayor of the city of Lugano. Bignasca and Borradori complemented one another wonderfully. One stood for bawdy politics, personal attacks and ultimatums, and the other for dialogue, compromise and respectful conduct. One was quick-tempered and uncouth, the other always composed and polite. There were also issues on which they could never agree, most notably concerning the environment and the canton's finances. However, they never

aired their differences in the media. They were an inseparable political pair right up until Giuliano Bignasca's death.

Bignasca's political views were contradictory and at times incoherent. So, too, was his private life. He was shy and suddenly found himself thrust into the spotlight. He was a self-confessed cocaine user but was certainly not proud of his vice. The reaction to the news of his death on 7 March 2013 showed that he was highly respected not just by his friends but also by his enemies, if not on a political level at least on a personal one. "The dwarf" had also been extremely generous, unable to turn away anyone who asked for his help. His willingness to help people surprised those who essentially saw him as a braggart and a provocative figure. His appearances in judge's robes at one of his trials or with a cane and wooden shoes in the National Council will live long in the memory.

He played a rather macabre role in the election of Lugano's city government on 14 April this year. He passed away after the official electoral lists had been submitted, and the Lega decided to leave his name on the list in light of the wave of emotion that had taken hold of the city. Bignasca was therefore re-elected. From

beyond the grave he helped the Lega to become the strongest party in the city government and contributed to the election of Borradori as city president.

Who will take over Bignasca's role?

What does the future hold for the Lega now? Does victory in Lugano represent the ultimate breakthrough or a final uprising before its demise? How will politics in Ticino change without Giuliano Bignasca? The party suddenly left leaderless went through a challenging few weeks. Despite calls for unity, there has been no shortage of controversy and internal conflict. The "Mattino", the great propaganda machine, has already moderated its language. The question is whether the party can continue Bignasca's recipe for success and maintain the balance between right and left. Much of the Lega's social understanding may also have disappeared with Bignasca. It is uncertain who will now take over the reins within the party. For the moment, it has decided upon collective leadership. However, Borradori is clearly the only person everyone trusts to replace the powerful figure of Bignasca.

The other parties have changed their attitude significantly during the 22-year period in which Giuliano Bignasca turned Ticino's political landscape upside down. They initially ignored Bignasca, then realised that they had underestimated him and began to fear him. They occasionally attempted to imitate him by adopting an even more aggressive tone than him. When they recognised the Lega's ability to anticipate major political issues, they began to cooperate and ally themselves with it. However, they have still not come to terms with the shock result at the election in April 2011. The traditional parties are adopting a cautious, hesitant approach and are puzzling over whether the Lega's success will be maintained. One of Bignasca's obituaries read: "He changed Ticino without ever having governed it." It remains to be seen whether this will continue after his death.

Voluntary military service?

A popular initiative going to referendum on 22 September 2013 is calling for the abolition of compulsory military service in Switzerland. However, the Swiss are clearly in favour of their army, more so than they once were.

By Jürg Müller

The issue lends itself extremely well to pathos: “Coexistence in our beautiful and secure country is based on citizens’ rights and duties. Military service is an expression of the duty of personal commitment.” These words were spoken by Corina Eichenberger-Walther, the Free Democrat security policy expert, in the National Council debate in December 2012. The popular initiative to abolish universal compulsory military service put forward by the “Group for a Switzerland without an Army” (GSoA) is proving emotive. There are times when you cannot fight with lightweight equipment and instead need to bring out the biggest guns – the opposition committee has relabelled the proposal the “insecurity initiative”. This committee contends that the initiative does not just concern the issue of compulsory military service; it argues that the initiators are seeking to abolish the army. In the case of the Group for a Switzerland without an Army, this point cannot simply be dismissed. The GSoA, too, has come out fighting in the referendum campaign: “Not everyone has time to play war games” was the title of the lead story in the May issue of the group’s publication “GSoA-Zitig”.

Fewer people required

What the initiative is seeking to achieve is radical. Compulsory military service would be abolished and replaced by a volunteer army. Those behind the initiative argue that Switzerland still has the largest army in Eu-

rope in relation to its population and that today’s security threats are no longer found in traditional military areas. National Councillor Evi Allemann, who is the Swiss Social Democrats’ security expert, says that “the armies made up of compulsory service personnel and primarily designed to defend the nation in the traditional manner” have become less significant since the end of the Cold War. She advocates systematic specialisation of the military services to concentrate on modern-day threats. However, this would require significantly fewer albeit better trained personnel.

Attack on one of Switzerland’s cornerstones

Supporters of compulsory military service see the initiative as an attack on one of Switzerland’s cornerstones. National security is the task of all Swiss citizens, they argue. An army in which people from all professions and strata of society serve ensures an extremely high-quality resource pool. A volunteer army would almost inevitably lead to a professional army owing to recruitment problems and this would not only contradict Switzerland’s militia principle, it would also prove more expensive. National Councillor Corina Eichenberger also addressed the problem of recruitment to volunteer armies during the parliamentary debate: “Every army tends to attract people with radical right-wing political views or an excessive thirst for adventure.

Under the current system, compulsory military service ensures that such risk groups remain in the minority.”

Mass army or not?

SP National Councillor Evi Allemann’s argument that mass armies are being phased out in Europe, and 20 of the 28 NATO countries now have or are planning to introduce a volunteer army, is countered by Defence Minister Ueli Maurer, who remarks that the cliché of a mass army must be discarded because “Switzerland does not have a mass army”. Only around 5,000 soldiers serve at the same time, excluding recruits in military training schools and instructors. However, more personnel could be called upon quickly if necessary. In contrast, with a volunteer army “we have no guarantee of having the necessary personnel resources available at a critical moment”. Maurer also points to the enormous recruitment problems of volunteer armies. He says: “Spain has to draft in people from South America, and the UK recruits its volunteers from prisons. Do we want to end up like that?”

This is hardly likely. The initiative’s proponents have a tough job on their hands. The “Security 2013” study published at the end of May by the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich shows significantly more people in favour of universal compulsory military service than was the case last year. The representative survey indicates a major shift in opinion among Swiss people over army-related issues. Last year, 48% were in favour of the abolition of compulsory military service, but that figure has now fallen to just 33%. The researchers at the Federal Institute of Technology attribute this to the public debate, which has begun early, bringing various organisations with close links to the army into the arena. However, they do not rule out the possibility of more significant shifts in the range of opinions during the actual referendum battle when the GSoA and its allies launch their campaign.

FURTHER REFERENDUM PROPOSALS

In addition to compulsory military service two further proposals will be decided at a referendum on 22 September 2013. The amendment to the Epidemics Act aims to provide better protection against communicable diseases and a more precise definition of the competences of federal government and the cantons. The referendum was called by groups critical of vaccination as part of their fight against feared compulsory state immunisation. The Federal Office of Public Health has ruled out such mandatory measures. The Swiss people will also decide on the liberalisation of opening hours for petrol station shops. Various church organisations and groups on the left called the referendum against around-the-clock opening, which they see as a prelude to further liberalisation. Proposals on longer shop opening hours in general are indeed pending in Parliament. The referendum committee is opposed to nights and Sundays being completely sacrificed to business interests.

(JM)

JÜRIG MÜLLER is an editor with the “Swiss Review”

Swiss people have no wish to elect the Federal Council

The Swiss people do not want to elect their government themselves. The “popular election of the Federal Council” initiative suffered an overwhelming defeat on 9 June 2013 with over 76% of the electorate voting against it.

By Jürg Müller

The Swiss People’s Party (SVP), which launched the popular initiative, went to great lengths to promote it, displaying giant posters with the slogan “Trust the people” and providing every Swiss household with a “special pamphlet”. The people should elect the Federal Council “to prevent Switzerland from collapse”, this proclaimed in big letters. That was something of an exaggeration. At any rate, their fervour did not spread. The fierce referendum campaign failed to materialise despite this being a fundamental issue in terms of the organisation of the Swiss state. The initiative’s opponents achieved their goal without any major anti-initiative propaganda.



The Swiss people will remain spectators in the election of the Federal Council

The SVP argued that the election of the Federal Council by the people rather than Parliament would be in line with the proven model used to elect the cantonal governments. The rights of the people would be enhanced, the principle of the sovereignty of the people would gain respect and the separation of powers would be strengthened. The opponents countered that popular election would ultimately turn the members of the government into pawns in party politics, overshadowing the real business of politics. They also warned of constant election campaigning involving huge costs.

The SVP’s heaviest defeat

The defeat was not unexpected, but the margin came as a surprise to everyone. No SVP initiative has ever been so comprehensively rejected. This is partly explained by the fact that the SVP did not even completely succeed in convincing its own supporters. Various party figures and sections openly supported a “no” vote. This defeat also indicates that proposals based on mistrust of existing institutions do not go down well with the people. Last year, the popular initiative calling for state treaties to be put before the people was rejected by around 75% of the electorate. The “sovereignty of the people instead of official propaganda” initiative, which sought to muzzle the Federal Council, was rejected by a similar margin in 2008. The “naturalisation to be decided by the people” initiative was also resoundingly defeated in 2008 with just under 64% opposing it. (comment right)

An act of wise self-restraint

No committee is more discussed in Switzerland than the Federal Council whose seven Federal Councillors enjoy permanent public attention. Yet the Swiss have not seized the opportunity to elect their political stars themselves by direct popular election. Is that not contradictory? No, it is an act of wise self-restraint. The Swiss are not filled with unquestioning faith in authority, but they have a well-developed sense of the importance of balanced and stable political institutions. Vehement criticism is levelled at the members of national government from time to time, but there is also a high degree of respect for the institution. Despite all the nay-saying, surveys indicate that the Federal Council enjoys high-level and recently even growing confidence.

The rejection of the Swiss People’s Party (SVP) initiative for the popular election of the Federal Council (see article left) represents an impressive vote of confidence in an extremely successful political system. There is no reason to disturb the finely balanced equilibrium between the people, Parliament and government. That is precisely what a system of popular election would have done.

There is no country in the world where the people have as much influence as in Switzerland. Extensive use is also made of direct democracy, and this is a major factor in Swiss stability. After all, where specialist issues are comprehensively debated and decided upon by the people, there is also greater acceptance of political decisions. That is the cornerstone of direct democracy. Popular election would not have enhanced political co-determination but at most may have heightened the political spectacle at the expense of continuity in government.

ASYLUM LAW TIGHTENED UP AGAIN

Asylum applications may no longer be submitted to Swiss embassies, unruly asylum seekers can be detained in special facilities, and federal government can open asylum centres without cantonal and communal authorisation. These amendments to asylum law were approved by the Swiss people on 9 June 2013 with over 78% voting in favour. The referendum against the proposals had been called by left-wing groups. This is the fifth time that asylum law has been tightened up in the past 25 years and five referenda against the changes have failed. The overwhelming approval indicates that many on the left also supported Social Democratic Justice Minister Simonetta Sommaruga, who said the bill would help to speed up the asylum process. Political analyst Claude Longchamp explained on Swiss television (SRF) that it was more a case of voters expressing their general discontent with asylum policy than approving a particular bill.

(JM)

JÜRIG MÜLLER

Incredible drama in the Federal Palace over a bank deal with the USA

The USA is exerting tremendous pressure on Switzerland to prevent financial institutions here from helping US citizens to conceal their assets and thus evade taxation in future.

By Barbara Engel

A state of emergency prevailed in the Federal Palace in Berne during the summer session. The reason for this was the federal law, known as the “Lex USA”, on measures to facilitate the resolution of the tax dispute between Swiss banks and the United States. The Federal Council was calling on Parliament to approve this law without informing it of the content. According to the Federal Council, the law would create a legal basis for the transfer of data by Swiss banks to the US authorities, enabling them to identify perpetrators of tax evasion and tax fraud. If this failed to materialise, the USA was threatening to take immediate legal action in the United States against Swiss banks for allegedly assisting tax fraud. It was also the USA that was demanding that the details of the law be disclosed only to the Federal Council and not to Parliament.

A parliament, as the legislative body, approving a law when it has not seen its content seems extremely dubious in a democracy. However, the “Lex USA” on the resolution of the tax dispute represented a delicate trade-off. What poses the greatest threat to the Swiss financial centre and the

economy – the transfer of data or the legal proceedings announced against the financial institutions? Put another way, is legal action by the USA against a Swiss bank tantamount to a death sentence? Probably not in the view of representatives of cantonal banks. However, the NZZ quoted analysis conducted by a US attorney’s office on just under a dozen cases of legal proceedings by the USA against financial institutions over the past 30 years, which revealed that, with one exception, all the institutions prosecuted had either been taken over or had completely stopped trading – if not always immediately, then after several years.

Back to the Federal Council

How can we save the Swiss financial centre? This was actually the question facing the parliamentarians. Followed every step of the way by the media, Federal Councillors, bank representatives, officials and experts, they attempted to learn something of the content of the “Lex USA” and organised a 40-hour marathon of meetings in various committees with Finance Minister Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf. Little progress was made. While the parliamentarians were able

to gain some insight into the content, it was ultimately not enough. The Council of States did in fact vote in favour of the law but a large majority in the National Council – united in an unlikely coalition made up of the Swiss People’s Party, the Social Democrats and the Free Democrat-Liberals – refused to support the bill and approve a deal that the “Süddeutsche Zeitung” called “a sale of indulgences to buy the banks’ freedom”. The hot potato was therefore passed back to the Federal Council.

On 3 July 2013, the Federal Council finally decided to attempt a new approach. In specific terms, it wants to grant any bank that asks for it the authorisation to transfer the data requested to the US authorities. This includes information on client structures, bank employees (see also box bottom right), third parties involved, such as trustees and lawyers, and on asset transfers to other countries by tax evaders who make their funds vanish. At the time of going to press, it was unclear whether the USA would be satisfied with this solution.

The US authorities undoubtedly already possess very extensive information on the procedures of the financial institutions, as the amnesty schemes offered by the IRS, the US tax authority, since 2009 have resulted in tens of thousands of US citizens declaring their assets abroad. So far, over 5 billion dollars in taxes has been paid retrospectively.

BARBARA ENGEL is the editor-in-chief of “Swiss Review”

THE FUTURE OF BANKING CONFIDENTIALITY

Switzerland must relinquish banking confidentiality in order to safeguard the success of its financial centre. This is the conclusion reached by a working group led by Bernese professor of economics Aymo Brunetti in an analysis carried out on behalf of the Federal Council. The Federal Council had previously backed a withholding tax as the way to protect banking confidentiality. This means that Swiss banks transfer taxes on foreign assets but the names of their clients remain confidential. However, Brunetti’s group of experts concluded that there is a clear international trend towards the automatic exchange of information. It is therefore advising the Federal Council to switch its focus to an international standard. Switzerland should become actively involved in developing this automatic exchange of information as soon as possible within the framework of the OECD, the group says. This would represent a radical change of direction in Federal Council policy.

WHAT IS HAPPENING WITH DATA PROTECTION?

A major issue in the tax dispute concerns what data banks will be allowed to provide to the US authorities in future. Bank employees, trustees and lawyers, in particular, are unsure as employee data has already been handed over in the “UBS case”. The Federal Data Protection and Information Commissioner, Hanspeter Thür, has declared that he will block any illegal transfer of data through the Federal Administrative Court. He has also sent the banks an information sheet on the data protection provisions. He is calling for transparency in relation to data transfers. The bank must inform the persons concerned in advance as to which documents are to be transferred and provide them with sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements. If a person opposes the transfer, the bank must justify it in accordance with the Data Protection Act. If information is sent against a person’s will, he or she can take legal action under civil law.

<http://www.edoeb.admin.ch/aktuell/index.html?lang=en>

The “emancipation of Switzerland” or an “attack on the welfare state”? The debate over a basic income

The popular initiative for an unconditional basic income (UBI) calls for everyone to receive a sum of 2,500 Swiss francs a month from the cradle to the grave with no conditions attached. This issue has thrown the traditional political fronts into confusion.

By Jürg Müller



“Would you work if your income was provided anyway?” There is no easy answer.

A celebration is to be held in Berne on 4 October 2013 – its organisers are inviting people to witness an “historic event”. They then plan to submit the 100,000-plus signatures supporting their popular initiative for an unconditional basic income to the Federal Chancellery. This issue is not just topical in Switzerland as signatures are also currently being collected in the EU for an EU citizens’ initiative (not comparable with popular initiatives in Switzerland). This is entitled: “Unconditional Basic Income (UBI) – Exploring a pathway towards emancipatory welfare conditions in the EU.”

It is a highly unusual situation that signatures are being collected for the same issue in both Switzerland and the EU. It remains to be seen whether this will really turn out to be an historic moment. Switzerland would in any event become the first country to introduce this finance transfer model. However, the concept is nothing new.

Controversy over financing

The basic income concept is straightforward. Every person would receive a fixed

basic sum of money irrespective of whether they are in employment or not and regardless of their financial situation. This would be without a service in return and it would not be subject to means testing. The different models provide for different solutions in relation to the financing and with regard to special social situations. However, the basic income should guarantee a minimum subsistence level. The organisers of the Swiss initiative have specified an amount of 2,500 Swiss francs a month for every adult, while children and young people up to the age of 18 would receive a quarter of the basic income, 625 Swiss francs.

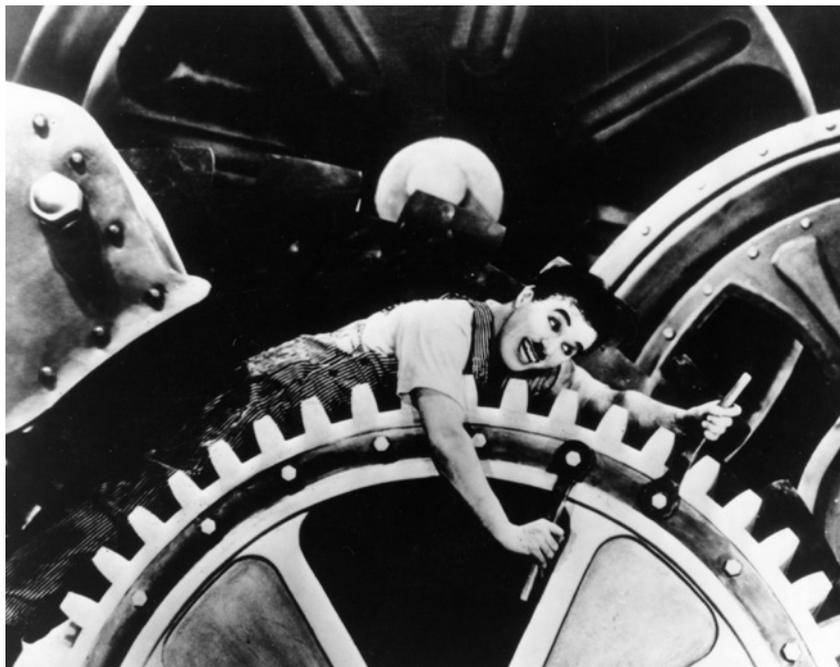
The text of the initiative does not say anything about how it would be financed. However, accompanying documentation does include some reflection on this. Firstly, salaries would be reduced by the basic income amount. Someone earning 6,000 Swiss francs a month would receive just 3,500 from their employer and 2,500 would go into the basic income fund. The basic income would also replace some welfare benefits. How the remainder is to be

financed remains a contentious issue, even among the advocates of the UBI. Would it mean a massive hike in VAT? Or the introduction of a wealth or financial transaction tax?

“Broad coalition” of supporters

If the basic principle were ever to be enshrined in the federal constitution, its actual implementation would prove a Herculean task and indeed an almost impossible undertaking. This issue nevertheless has the potential to throw the traditional political fronts into confusion, and it is this that makes the debate on the UBI an exciting political project. Supporters can be found on the left, in the centre and on the right of the political spectrum. But the most vehement opponents also come from different camps. The dividing line does not simply run between political blocks but right through parties and factions. It is not a party or a lobby group that is behind the popular initiative but rather a loose confederation of like-minded people from different camps and with a diverse range of interests. The most high-profile advocate on the initiative committee is Oswald Sigg, a member of the Swiss Social Democratic Party (SP) and former Vice-Chancellor and Federal Council speaker. The list of proponents also includes one or two economists from the University of St. Gallen and the Federal Institute of Technology.

This “broad coalition of basic income supporters” consists of neo-liberals, progressive thinkers and people on the left of the political spectrum, writes Heiner Flassbeck, who until the end of last year was a Director at UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), in his book “Irrweg Grundeinkommen” (Basic Income – the Wrong Approach). He says all those supporting the initiative share the hope of resolving problems with simple mechanisms. Elements on the right of politics are seeking to permanently put an end to the funda-



What is the value of work?

mental debate on distribution issues through a basic income that would obviously be as low as possible. Those on the left are hoping “to successfully combat poverty and, at the same time, provide an effective solution to the ecology issue and the question as to the ‘real value’ of life”. As far as Flassbeck is concerned, these are all delusions.

Those behind the popular initiative consider the UBI to be nothing less than the “emancipation of Switzerland”. This is also the title of the pamphlet on the initiative. This focuses heavily on liberation from constraints and the release of creativity. It explains that while all people want to work they also seek a sense of purpose and fulfilment in this. Few would in any case be satisfied with a subsistence level of income. However, this raises the question of who would still do all the poorly paid, hard jobs that nobody wants. Ulrich Beck, one of the most well-known German sociologists, provided the German “Tagesspiegel” newspaper with a disarming answer: “These jobs would become very expensive because they have to be done and because it would no longer be possible to fob people off with a pittance.”

Fundamental social issues

Oswald Sigg believes the proposal deals with fundamental issues. The UBI initiative raises “in the first place questions about work, income, wealth, poverty, an

egoistic or fair society and a caring or capitalist society”. He also points out that 50% of hours worked are unpaid – housework, work on behalf of the family, social work, and political and cultural work. This trend is increasing because advancements in productivity are resulting in job cuts. At the same time “our highly developed welfare system has a remarkable number of hidden cases”. “Many people living in poverty go without state welfare support.” Around 60% of those who are in need and are entitled to welfare benefits do not even contact the social security authorities, Sigg argues. The reason for this, he says, is that every applicant is subjected “to general suspicion fuelled by politicians. They are distrusted”. Sigg firmly believes that the system of social harmonisation does not work. This alone underlines how necessary the UBI is.

Streamlining the state

The neo-liberal proponents of the basic income are pursuing a different approach. Their priority is not social considerations but instead the streamlining of the state. Thomas Straubhaar, a neo-liberal Swiss anti-statist and Director of the Hamburg Institute of International Economics, wants the UBI to replace existing social insurance systems and to help merge government transfer payments. The former UBS chief economist Klaus W. Wellershoff takes the same line. In an interview, he de-

scribes the current social insurance system as “ridiculously complicated and unsustainable” and even labels it “undemocratic” in its complexity. He considers that “transparency is the key factor with regard to basic income”.

The left and business community less enthusiastic

The UBI would raise a question mark over paid work as the model for business and society. That represents an affront to the traditional left as well as the business community. The economist Rudolf H. Strahm, a former SP National Councillor and price supervisor, sees the UBI as a “fundamental, targeted attack on the welfare state”. This is because a uniform monthly payment of 2,500 Swiss francs could never replace the tailored social insurance schemes for poverty, disability and hardship, etc. The personal responsibility of young people for their own existence and future would also be undermined. A permanent state subsidy would “stifle motivation and dynamism” and provide a “social incentive for people to adopt a “can’t be bothered” attitude causing them to miss out on opportunities in life”.

The former SP National Councillor and trade unionist André Daguet also warns against the UBI initiative. The conservative-dominated Parliament would attempt to achieve welfare cuts through the actual structuring of the basic income by introducing the lowest possible basic income and abolishing the remaining social insurance schemes. This would result in the weak in society “being definitively marginalised and the lowest wages being forced down”, writes Daguet in the SP party publication “links”.

The business federation Economiesuisse has also analysed the initiative and published a comprehensive study of it in October 2012. Its verdict is damning: the UBI is an “expensive utopia that jeopardises prosperity” and which is “likely to have a major impact on Switzerland’s economic performance and competitiveness”. Economiesuisse also draws the conclusion that the savings in the welfare system, provided no benefit cuts are made, could be significantly less than one might expect at first glance. This is because numerous transfer payments far exceed the planned basic income.

Between two worlds: books and literary figures among the Swiss abroad

By Charles Linsmayer

He conquered the whole world with his poetry before ultimately returning to Sigriswil – Blaise Cendrars

A call to arms was made in Paris on 29 July 1914, five days before France entered the First World War. This began: "This is a grave moment (...) The time for words has passed, let us act! Foreigners, friends of France, for whom this country has become a second home, feel an imperative duty to serve it." This call was written by the Italian Canudo and the enfant terrible of the Parisian avant-garde, Switzerland's Blaise Cendrars, alias Freddy Sauser.

Globetrotter and heartthrob

Freddy Sauser, who was born on 1 September 1887 as a citizen of Sigriswil in La Chaux-de-Fonds, left home at the age of 16 and spent some time living in Persia, China and Russia, where he witnessed the 1905 revolution. When he began studying medicine in Berne in 1908, he was still suffering from the trauma of the mysterious death of his Russian fiancée Helena in a fire and in light of this experience it is little wonder that he soon switched his focus to literature. He still did not attend any lectures but he was by now completely obsessed with two female Polish students. He loved the blonde Féla and made the dark-haired Bella so jealous that she urged her friend to join her in a double-suicide pact. This time, however, he was able to avert tragedy and took Féla to Spiez where he spent an amorous summer living on credit and wrote his first love poems. By the time he called the foreigners to arms in 1914, he had spent a second spell in Russia, had visited the USA and, thanks to works such as "Les Paques à New York" and "Prose du Transsibérien" under the pseudonym Blaise Cendrars, he was regarded in Paris as the poet who, according to André Malraux, had "rediscovered poetry" for the French.

Fighting for France at the front

On 3 September 1914, he joined the army and two weeks later married Féla Poznanska, who by then already had a

son and would give him two other children. In October, he entered the foreign legion as a corporal and took part in the protracted trench warfare where hundreds of thousands bled to death for the sake of a few metres of land until he himself was so severely injured on 28 September 1915 that he had to have his right arm amputated. This released him from frontline duty, allowed him to return to his writing and provided the title for his 1946 novel "La Main coupée", a nightmarish account of trench warfare in 1914/15.

Full of vitality despite disability

Cendrars, who took French citizenship in 1916, continued to live his life despite his disability in a way that was inextricable from his 40-title literary oeuvre in terms of intensity, spirit of adventure and fullness until his death on 21 January 1961. He provoked a scandal in the USA in 1925 with "L'Or", the life story of General Suter, and in "Moravagine" in 1926 drew out the literary quintessence of the wars of his time. He gave much of his own perspective with his insatiable zest for life in "Bourlinguer" in 1948. "To the End of the World", which appeared in French in 1956, presented the character of Madame Thérèse – the myth of Paris in human form, the symbol of unfathomable human desires.

He had a platonic love for Raymonde Duchâteau lasting 32 years. When she became his second wife in 1949, the ceremony took place in Sigriswil, his place of origin, which wholeheartedly welcomed its famous son, causing him to exclaim: "I am very proud to suddenly be Bernese and an Oberländer, yes an Oberländer, I'm bowled over by that!"



Quotation:

"It is as though there were a forest behind me. I hear all the voices from the past. My life flounders in an impossible blind alley where misery threatens to overwhelm me. I hope I can endure it. I've become so used to it that I soon won't be able to do without it. It sounds terrible, another two or three years and I'll be addicted to misery. It will reach the point where I need it as a stimulant. What a subject!" (To Féla Poznanska, 10 August 1912)

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Cendrars' complete works are available in French from Denoël, and German translations can be obtained from Arche and Lenos.

CHARLES LINSMAYER is a literary scholar and journalist in Zurich

A musical epic

With his catchy brand of folksy pop, Bastian Baker has taken Switzerland, France and Belgium by storm. The former ice hockey player from canton Vaud is highly driven and is preparing to launch his second album "Too Old To Die Young". An interview on the shores of Lake Geneva with a young singer-songwriter who possesses remarkable maturity.

By Alain Wey



Bastian Baker by Lake Geneva

He is a winner, applying the mentality of an elite sportsman to a musical career, and he is also extremely talented. Bastian Baker has all of these attributes and more. In less than two years, the 22-year-old Vaud-born artist has established a reputation extending well beyond Swiss borders. An outstanding on-stage performer, the singer-songwriter began a tour of France and Belgium in March which runs until November. In the autumn he will release his second album "Too Old To Die Young" which was recorded in the UK and mixed in New York. With over 70 concerts and other big performances in 2012, he has gained a wealth of experience. Passing through Switzerland in June after a concert in Moscow, the former ice hockey player opened up on his astonishing rise while sitting at a table on a terrace overlooking Lake Geneva. Humour, verve and a sharp wit underlie the tremendous positive energy which this musician effuses.

From the ice-hockey rink to the stage

"It feels like I've always been a musical artist," reveals Bastian Kaltenbacher. At the age of five, he was singing R.E.M. songs in the bar at the restaurant in Lausanne owned by his father Bruno, who was a professional ice hockey player. He listened to the music his

parents liked, including Led Zeppelin, The Eagles, The Beatles and The Rolling Stones. The budding musician grew up in Villeneuve (canton Vaud) where he was a member of his school choir. He began playing the guitar at the age of seven at the same time as ice hockey. He recalled: "I attended classes for five years at the academy of music. At the time, I was a poor student because playing music other people had already produced frustrated me. I wanted to compose my own music." Nicknamed "Kalti" on the ice, he learned his trade as an ice hockey player during an eight-year spell with Monthey (canton Valais) before joining Fribourg-Gottéron and then Lausanne in the NLB. He explained: "I finished playing at the end of the 2010–2011 season when I was with Martigny and Visp." One month later, he was on stage at the Caprice Festival in Crans-Montana (canton Valais). "All of my ice hockey friends had come to see me perform. It was a smooth transition."

A big gamble turned his life upside down. He was invited to record a song at a studio in Paris in February 2011. The folksy pop track entitled "Lucky" became a hit on the radio in just a few weeks in Switzerland and opportunities began to open up. He said: "It really began to sink in while I was driving. I was on the radio after Rihanna. It was an incredible feeling. I said to myself: 'I've got to make the most of this opportunity because this is incredible.'" In July, he released his album "Tomorrow May Not Be Better" which he wrote between the ages of 15 and 19. In the first week of its release, the album reached third spot in the Swiss charts. He played at the Montreux Jazz Festival not on stage 1 or 2 but on the off stage in the open air outside the auditoriums. He remarked: "It was one of my best concerts because I was on the stage where I had been a spectator every year since the age of two."

A lucky man

Was "Lucky" a prophetic track? He said: "It's just a way of expressing my gratitude because I am aware that I have been lucky throughout

my life – I've got an extremely cool family, enjoyed my time at school and have good friends. I've also got this gift of music." 2012 began with a bang. In March, he won the Swiss Music Award for the best newcomer. This occasion revealed something that would become one of Bastian Baker's trademarks. He performed guitar-vocals alone on stage in front of an audience of thousands at the award ceremony in Zurich's Hallenstadion. He has repeated this type of performance on many occasions as the support act for international stars. He played before 13,000 people at the Roxette concert in Zurich and 30,000 when Johnny Hallyday visited the "Stade de Genève". He has never experienced stage fright. He explains: "I've never suffered from it because I try to prepare myself beforehand. I adopt an analytical approach. What is stage fright? Anxiety. What is anxiety? Fear of the unknown because you don't know what is going to happen. If you tell yourself that what you are doing right now will be nothing more than a memory tomorrow, everything will be OK." The conquest of Switzerland was under way and momentum was gathering. The show became professional and he never stopped touring. In 2012 he performed at the Auditorium Stravinski at the Montreux Jazz Festival. His appeal was such that he was invited to take part in the French version of the hit show "Dancing with the Stars". He has been welcomed with open arms in France, performing at legendary venues such as l'Olympia and La Cigale in Paris. He revealed: "We have worked really hard on the live performances. On one occasion, I was a real tyrant with my band. I locked them in the room and we played the songs over and over again until we'd perfected them. We all had an eye on leaving Switzerland and going further afield. We have a light show with video projections behind the stage. I've been able to take my show where I've wanted."

Increasingly far-flung destinations

"Good evening, Brussels!" The crowd roars in the concert hall of the Orangerie du



Performing at the Stravinski Auditorium in Montreux

Botanique in the Belgian capital. Bastian Baker's song "I'd Sing For You" entered the top half of the Belgian charts in spring 2013. He has been playing concerts in France and Belgium since March. By visiting Germany, Moscow, New York and Los Angeles, the Vaud-born singer is making his ambitions clear. He says: "I would love to break through in Russia because it's a musical market that nobody cares about in Switzerland. Nobody wants to pursue a career in Russia. That's what appeals to me – I would like to be able to say that I'm playing a stadium in Moscow. Besides the prestige of success in France, achieving popular success in somewhere like Russia or China is a very attractive prospect."

Second album – "Too Old To Die Young"
Bastian Baker's second album "Too Old To Die Young" will be released on 27 September in Switzerland and on 7 October in France and Belgium. He recorded it with top musicians from the English-speaking world in twelve days in Brackley on the outskirts of London at the home studio of Jamiroquai's pianist, Toby Smith. "I like to work quickly. I like to seize the moment. I don't redo an album four times if I'm not happy with something. You have to maintain a certain degree of spontaneity which must come across in the recording." He then flew to New York in June to mix the album with Mark Plati, the former guitarist of David Bowie who has also collabo-

rated with The Cure, Robbie Williams and Natalie Imbruglia. "I've come of age. In two years, I've had the opportunity to get to know many artists and to discover lots of new ways of working. My second album is more mature with more sophisticated arrangements." The style is eclectic, from acoustic ballads featuring the cello to elements of heavy rock. He remarked: "The first album was very autobiographical, raising many questions. This time I think I'm more of an observer of life. There are still some autobiographical elements but above all lots of imaginary situations." The track "Earrings On The Table" tells of a magical love story, the beginning and end of which are symbolized by a pair of earrings left lying on a bedside table. The song "Never In Your Town" is about a man who lives on a boat and is liberated from the notion of passing time. "I reveal that I'm not a fan of New Year because I don't like the idea of being stopped in time and things being frozen." The first single "79 Clinton Street" was inspired by Bastian Baker's trip to New York and hit the airwaves in June.

A solution-oriented state of mind

The musician explained: "I've made lots of progress in many areas. Everyone around me has developed too. You must not forget that we are a team that performs a trade. My manager is not essentially a manager and the same goes for my producer. As for myself, I'm an ice hockey player. My band members are friends that I've known since the age of 15. It's excellent for the live performances because it produces real energy – there's a genuine osmosis." Bastian Baker is aware that he has changed, not in the sense of allowing success to go to his head but in terms of development. "All of the questions I asked in the tracks on my first album... what was all that about? I found the days short. What drove me mad was having a routine, a tedious existence. I didn't see any way out. It felt like I was floating or drifting. Over the past three years, I've spent more time focusing on solutions than problems. Just a small change in my outlook has opened up new horizons. Today, I'm always full of enthusiasm and positivity."

www.bastianbaker.com

Alain Wey is an editor at "Swiss Review"

“When the Alps glow bright...”

The Swiss Alpine Club celebrates its 150th anniversary this year. It is thanks to this organization that our mountains no longer hold any secrets. We turn the spotlight on a sporting association that has developed in line with Swiss society and talk to Françoise Jaquet, the club's president.

By Alain Wey

It was established 150 years ago, just fifteen years after the foundation of the federal state in 1848. The Swiss Alpine Club (SAC) is an integral part of our nation's history. “Without it the Alps would not be such a big part of Swiss identity,” remarked Ueli Maurer, President of Switzerland, at the club's general meeting in June. Founded in 1863 after the British (1857) and Austrian (1862) clubs, the SAC initially focused on alpine exploration and the construction of mountain huts to facilitate ascents. Its activities then extended to mountain rescue, mountain sports instruction and environmental protection. It also has a publishing house (guides, maps etc.) and a monthly magazine called “The Alps”. As Switzerland's fifth largest sporting association, it has seen its membership triple over the past 50 years and double over the last two decades to reach over 140,000 in 2013. Its history and development have reflected that of Switzerland politically, economically and socially over the past 150 years. This is underlined by the election of Françoise Jaquet from Fribourg as the club's first female president in June. A look back in time at altitude.

The golden age of mountaineering – a period of rapid growth

In the middle of the 19th century, the mountains and peaks still held many secrets. This was also the golden age of mountaineering (1855–1865) when the highest European and Swiss summits were conquered, mainly by British teams. A patriotic movement with a scientific approach emerged in Switzerland, with the geologist Rudolf Theodor Simler a prominent figure. He did not want Swiss people seeking to find out about the Alps to have to refer to British publications. “Such a thing would be embarrassing, even shameful,” he remarked. It was against this backdrop that the Swiss



The SAC's central committee in 1893
The Monte Rosa Hut officially opened in 2009,
the Dom Hut with the Weissshorn around 1900
and the Krönten Hut in the Gotthard region

“Our dual role as user and protector of the natural environment is a delicate balance.”

The new president of the SAC since 15 June, Françoise Jaquet, aged 56, has been a cross-country skiing specialist (with sealskins) for over 25 years. Holding a doctorate in microbiology, the native of Fribourg works for Swissmedic, the Swiss body responsible for the control and authorization of therapeutic products. She joined the SAC in 1990, initially becoming a member of the Wintertbur section where she lived at the time and then the Moléson section in 2000 after the tragic death of her husband in a mountain accident. President of the Moléson section from 2007 to 2011, she joined the SAC's central committee in 2010 and became its vice-president in 2012.



Is having a woman at the head of the SAC symbolic?

Yes, to an extent. The SAC has always reflected society. In 1907, the duties of men and women were clearly divided. What I mean by that is that men were entitled to do certain things while women were not. From the moment women tried to set things straight they were excluded. It was only after women were granted the right to vote that the SAC readmitted them in 1979. There was a time lag but this was in keeping with societal developments. And it seems that in 2013 the club was ready to have a female president.



How do you explain the sharp rise in the SAC's membership?

There is genuine enthusiasm for the mountains. The SAC has also become more modern and dynamic than it was 50 years ago. The range of sports and activities has increased significantly. There has been a snowball effect. The fact that the alpine club's activities allow people to explore the mountains in groups and enjoy one another's company on these trips is also a key factor.

What are the main challenges facing the club?

Our new strategy, which was approved by our delegates on 15 June, runs until 2020. One of the major challenges we face is volunteering, which is our main means of operation in terms of both the section committees and the course leaders. It is unfortunately becoming increasingly difficult to find volunteers. Our dual role as user and protector of the natural environment is also a delicate balance. We aim to protect untouched areas but this is not easy in the light of economic pressures. Financing the renovation of the 152 mountain huts is also a major challenge. We are trying to renovate those in need of it

while respecting the environment (sanitation systems, solar panels instead of generators). All this is expensive, especially since all the equipment is transported by helicopter. Another challenge is technical training on safety and ecology in the mountains.

What role does the SAC play in mountain rescue?

The SAC works closely with Rega. Together we set up Swiss Alpine Rescue in 2005. The club's mountain rescue services and Rega's helicopters work together on rescue operations.

What is your philosophy of life?

I love being in the mountains but also enjoy the physical exercise in achieving a goal despite the difficulties. I try to maintain my composure despite the challenges – I think I'm that sort of person. You take decisions at all stages of life and once they've been taken you have to stick with them. That's how it works. I always bear in mind one of Einstein's maxims: “Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving.”

Alpine Club was founded on 19 April 1863 in the buffet restaurant at Olten railway station by 35 men belonging to the upper echelons of Swiss society (scholars, politicians and bourgeoisie). Its objective was to develop the alpine region. In order to achieve this, the club periodically selected areas for excursions on which members would focus and published topographical maps and literature on the geological and botanical findings obtained. It constructed pathways and huts in the mountains and organized the training of guides. The first hut in Tödi (Grünhornhütte, canton Glarus) was built in 1863. By the outbreak of the First World War there were 75 huts, and by the time the Second World War broke out there were 115. In his thesis on the emergence and development of the SAC, the sociologist Andrea Porrini points out that the sporting association “along with the development of the apparatus of state and the

boom in tourism contributed to the process of opening up the national territory”.

Unloved sport

Mountaineers have skied in the Glarus Alps since the 1890s. While skiing is clearly superior to snowshoes in terms of speed and pleasure, most of the SAC's sections regarded skiing as a passing fad, overlooking its practical benefits. Although the sport became increasingly popular amongst young people during the First World War, the SAC failed to respond. Skiing did not enter into the club's bylaws until 1923. The impact was remarkable as within three years the initiatives on skiing (publication of route guides, training of instructors etc.) saw the number of young members increase by 80%.

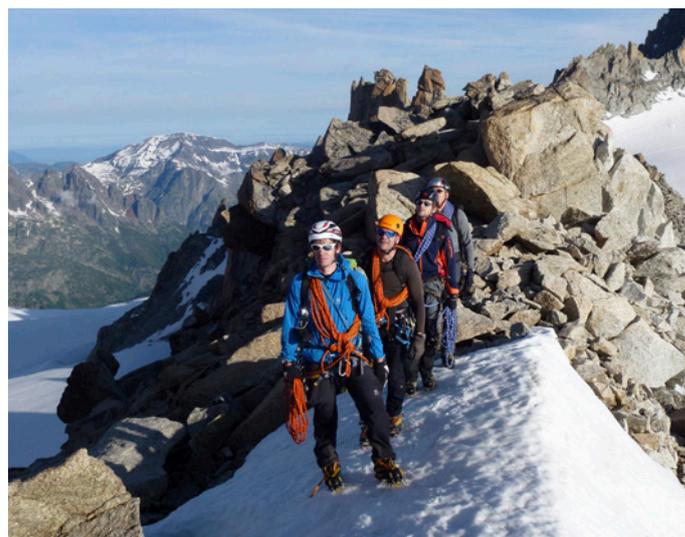
Female mountaineering

The club's development in line with that of Swiss society became even more evident

with the emancipation of women. While women took part in some of the emerging club's excursions, they were excluded from 1907. Instead of allowing their passion to be dictated by the patriarchy, Swiss women set up the “Swiss Club of Female Mountaineers” in 1918. It took over half a century before the two clubs finally merged in 1980 – nine years after women were given the right to vote at a federal level. They now make up over a third of the SAC's membership. A case of everyone is equal before the mountain? That is a question of viewpoint. The mountains take no interest in the gender of the people who explore them. In admiring the mountains we can also learn something from them.

www.sac-cas.ch

ALAIN WEY is an editor at «Swiss Review»



A roped party with a woman on the Beichtgrat around 1900 and an alpine tour in the Orny area of Lower Valais

ALPINE CLUB FACTS AND FIGURES

Over 140,000 members, of whom around a third are women. Age structure: 11% aged 6 to 22, 15% aged 23 to 35, 29% aged 36 to 50, 18% aged 51 to 60 and 27% aged 61 and over.

- 111 regional sections
- 152 mountain huts
- 9,200 places to sleep
- 310,000 overnight stays a year
- 1,500 mountain guides
- 8,000 volunteers
- 97 rescue stations and around 3,000 active volunteer rescuers
- 200 training courses a year

SWISS ALPINE MUSEUM CELEBRATES ANNIVERSARY

To celebrate the 150th anniversary, the Swiss Alpine Museum in Berne is holding an exhibition entitled “Helvetia Club” until 30 March 2014, tracing the history of the SAC against the backdrop of a mountain hut. Visitors to the exhibition can find out about the sporting association's demographic, sociological, political and infrastructural development by visiting seven stations. Giant, breathtaking frescos provide visitors with an adrenaline rush and they can also enjoy the filmed accounts of three generations of female mountaineers. The SAC's network

of 152 mountain huts can be viewed through binoculars. They are represented by models suspended from the ceiling according to their altitude. The exhibition is rounded off by a contemplation on global warming and the melting of the glaciers. What state will the Alps be in by 2063? Artists' impressions provide us with a glimpse of the future. Will the Aletsch glacier have turned into a lake where it will be possible to swim at an altitude of 2,850 metres? Visitors are left to ponder what the future might hold.

www.alpinesmuseum.ch

OSA advice

I have to get a life certificate endorsed for my old-age and survivors' insurance pension. Where can I do that?

As a general rule, anyone who receives an old-age and survivors' insurance (AHV) or invalidity insurance (IV) pension is obliged to sign a so-called life certificate every year and have this endorsed by an official authority. This proves that the pension recipient is still alive and is still entitled to the pension. The life certificate is one of various measures used by the Swiss Compensation Office (SAK) to prevent abuse of the system.

The bodies from which endorsement can be obtained are determined by the Swiss Compensation Office in Geneva and differ depending on the country. In geographically smaller countries where travel to the Swiss consulate is deemed reasonable, only the Swiss representation can usually issue such endorsements. In other countries, local authorities or local lawyers of the country of residence can also issue an endorsement.

If you visit Switzerland, you can also have the life certificate endorsed by one of the compensation offices in Switzerland (visitor service).

Communal administrations in Switzerland can also endorse a life certificate but are not obliged to do so. It is therefore advisable to call them beforehand to find out whether this service is provided.

Swiss Compensation Office:

www.zas.admin.ch

Addresses of the compensation offices:

<http://www.ausgleichskasse.ch/portal/index.asp>

SARAH MASTANTUONI, Head of the Legal Department

The Organisation of the Swiss Abroad's Legal Department provides general legal information on Swiss law and specifically in areas that concern the Swiss abroad. It does not provide information on foreign law and does not intervene in disputes between private parties.

Walther Hofer passes away



Walther Hofer, honorary president of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, passed away in Berne on 1 June aged 92. Hofer was president of OSA from 1983 to 1992. He made a lasting impression on the organisation and the perception of the Swiss diaspora by establishing OSA's independence as a foundation under federal supervision and ensuring the prominent presence of the Swiss abroad at the Swiss confederation's 700th anniversary celebrations.

As a member of the Bernese BGB/SVP, Hofer was a National Councillor from 1963 to 1979 where he established a reputation for himself as a foreign policy expert. His work at the Council of Europe won him international recognition. One of his roles there was as President of the Committee on Non-Represented Nations.

Walther Hofer was a Professor of Modern General History at the University of Berne from 1960 to 1988. He had previously worked at the Freie Universität Berlin and Columbia University in New York. He leaves behind an extensive oeuvre of published academic work on politics and contemporary history specialising in National Socialism and the Second World War.

RUDOLF WYDER

Contacts around the world

Young Swiss people abroad can enjoy group holidays or an educational visit, take part in ski camps or summer camps and attend language courses in Switzerland. The offers of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) enable them to establish contacts all over the world.

Victor from Mexico, Rebecca from Egypt and Sophia from France have been meeting up at OSA summer camps for years. This year they were in Prêles together. "We regularly exchange emails and follow each other on Facebook, so we always know what the others are doing. We talk about films, music, celebrities and news from around the world or we simply chat," explains Victor. "We are already looking forward to our next get-together in Switzerland. And there are always new faces, which is what makes OSA's offers so interesting," says Rebecca. Sophia remarks: "You meet people from all over the world. To begin with, the red passport is the only thing you have in common but you soon realise that there's much more to it than that."

Over 200 young people from all over the world took advantage of OSA's offers for young people this summer. The Swiss



The right insurance – with Soliswiss

Protection against political risk, life and health insurance, wealth management

General Assembly on 15 August 2013 with registration at www.soliswiss.ch, T +41 31 380 70 30

soliswiss



abroad who have chosen an educational visit or the "Discover Switzerland" project will be arriving in the autumn. We at OSA put together a programme for the young people involved that is tailored to their wishes and requirements. Staying with a Swiss host family is always an extremely valuable experience for our visitors.

A group of young Swiss abroad will meet for the Federal Youth Session Seminar from 12 to 18 September 2013. A session is held in the Federal Palace every year where young people can express their views and make their requests to decision-makers in Switzerland. Swiss abroad have been able to participate in this session for many years now. OSA prepares participants for the session as it is a unique opportunity to take a look behind the scenes of Swiss politics. There are still places available for the Youth Session Seminar.

OSA is now taking bookings for the winter sports camp from 26.12.2013 to 4.1.2014 in Lenz / Lenzerheide. The ski resort in the mountains of Grisons is very popular with young Swiss abroad. This camp enjoys a legendary status for those who like to spend New Year in the snow.

The winter language courses take place between 7 and 18 January 2014. The Swiss abroad practise a national language and get to know Switzerland. We at OSA hope many of you will register.

*As usual, further information can be found at www.aso.ch or obtained from Organisation of the Swiss Abroad Youth Service
Tel.: +41 (0)31 351 61 00
youth@aso.ch*

Winter camp for 8 to 14 year olds

Whether they are skiers or snowboarders, beginners or at an advanced level, Swiss children living abroad aged 8 to 14 will have a great time at our winter camp.

Winter camp Sedrun (Grisons)

Date: Thursday, 26 December 2013 to Saturday, 4 January 2014

No. of participants: 48

Cost: CHF 900 (contribution to the camp)

Ski or snowboard hire: Approx. CHF 150

Registration deadline: 30 October 2013

Registration

Precise details on the winter camps and the registration form will be available from 15 September 2013 at www.sjas.ch. Depending on personal circumstances reduced contribution rates may be offered. The form required for this can be requested using the registration form. We are also happy to post you our information brochure on request.

For more information: Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (SfAS)

Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3006 Berne, Tel +41 31 356 61 16, Fax +41 31 356 61 01

email: sjas@aso.ch

JUSKILA camp at Lenk free of charge

The youth ski camp will take place from 2 to 9 January 2014. Twenty Swiss children living abroad, 13 and 14 years old, can attend free of charge.

The Swiss Ski association organises a ski camp at Lenk every year for 600 Swiss children born in 1999 and 2000, including twenty Swiss children living abroad. To take part in the Juskila trip, Swiss children living abroad must be able to communicate in at least one of the three Swiss national languages (German, French or Italian). A draw will take place to choose the winners. Only the camp itself is covered (winter sports coaching, food and accommodation). Parents will be responsible for organising and financing travel to and from the camp. Applicants will be informed of the outcome of the draw at the end of October.

REGISTRATION FORM FOR THE DRAW FOR JUSKILA (2 TO 9 JAN. 2014)

Please complete in clear print.

First name: _____ Surname: _____

No., street: _____ Town/city, postcode: _____

Country: _____ Date of birth: _____

Name of parent(s)/guardian(s): _____

Female Male Telephone: _____

Commune of origin in Switzerland (see Passport/ID): _____

Email address of parent(s)/guardian(s): _____

Type of sport Alpine skiing Cross-country skiing Snowboarding

Please tick just one box. The choice of sport cannot be changed after the draw.

Language of child German French Italian

Signature of parent(s)/guardian(s): _____

Signature of child: _____

Please send the form, together with a **copy of the Swiss passport** of a parent/guardian or the child, by 15 October 2013 (date of receipt) to: **Foundation for Young Swiss abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, 3006 Berne, SWITZERLAND. For more information: Foundation for Young Swiss abroad (SJAS); Tel +41 31 356 61 16, Fax +41 31 356 61 01, email: sjas@aso.ch, www.sjas.ch**

Electronic voting on track

All eligible Swiss voters abroad are to be able to vote electronically in referenda and elections in the future, even if they do not reside in an EU or Wassenaar country. The Federal Council is lifting the existing restriction, according to its third report on electronic voting adopted in mid June.

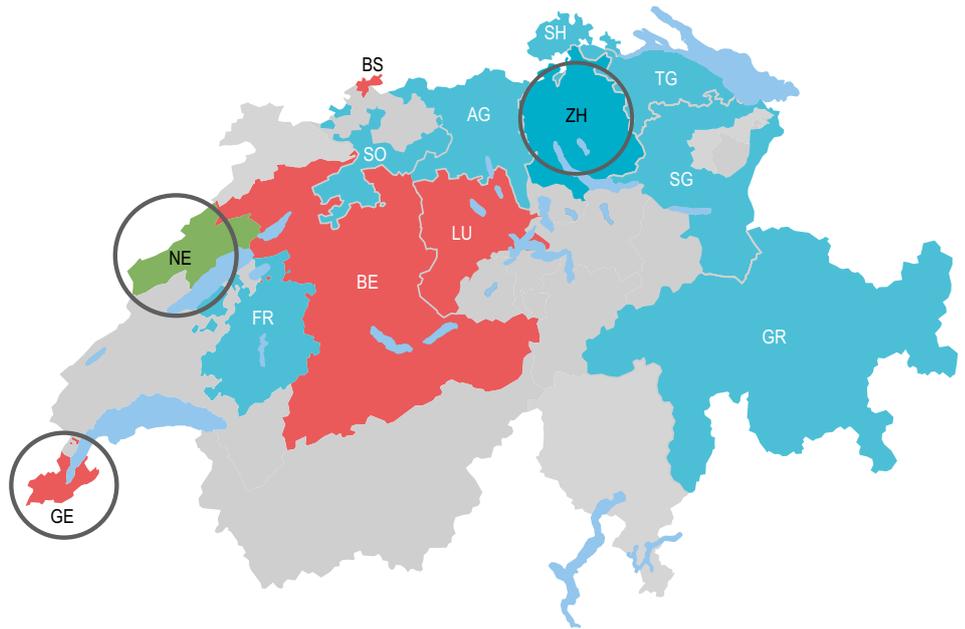
Swiss abroad residing in an EU state or a country that has signed the Wassenaar Agreement enabling the encrypted transmission of electronic data, were permitted to take part in the previous electronic voting trials. This covered 90% of the Swiss abroad. The other roughly 10% of Swiss abroad eligible to vote had no access to electronic voting even if the canton on whose electoral roll they were entered provided this opportunity.

The Federal Council has now weighed up the benefits and drawbacks and has decided to waive the Wassenaar restriction from 1 January 2014. Eligible voters residing in countries where the use of encryption technologies is not permitted will be informed of the possible consequences of voting online. The cantons will notify eligible Swiss voters abroad and explain the issue and any potential consequences (e.g. information sheet with the voting documents and/or on their website). It will then be at the discretion of the person concerned whether to vote electronically or not.

The Wassenaar restriction came in for constant criticism from eligible Swiss voters abroad and the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA). Postal delivery of the voting material is often poor, particularly in those countries that have not signed the agreement. Voting was therefore made virtually impossible for the Swiss abroad in certain countries.

Second trial phase also successful

The Federal Council's assessment of the second trial phase of the project (2006 to 2012) was just as positive as the first. Electronic voting has proven itself as a third, supplementary channel for voting and has received widespread acceptance among those eligible to vote. Electronic voting was extended to new cantons in the last trial



The three electronic voting systems and the cantons taking part in the project

phase and eligible Swiss voters abroad were treated as a priority target group.

The systems developed at the beginning of the year 2000 by the cantons of Zurich, Neuchâtel and Geneva have been available to other cantons since 2009 thanks to inter-cantonal agreements. Berne, Lucerne and Basel-Stadt have opted for the Geneva system. Fribourg, Solothurn, Schaffhausen, St. Gallen, Grisons, Aargau and Thurgau are deploying a version of Zurich's system. Uri, Obwalden and Valais are planning to conduct trials from 2013. These three cantons have chosen the Geneva system. The canton of Vaud has drawn up relevant legislation and intends to implement its first trials from 2014. Zurich also plans to resume trials with electronic voting from 2014. A clear majority of 18 cantons has therefore decided in favour of introducing electronic voting. It is no longer a question of whether but when those eligible will be able to cast their vote via the Internet.

The cantons primarily focused on eligible Swiss voters abroad in the 2006 to 2012 trial phase. By including eligible voters among the Swiss abroad in other cantons, valuable experience was obtained with a manageable target group that stands to benefit greatly from electronic voting in light of the frequent problems with postal voting. Some cantons also allowed some of their eligible voters residing in Switzerland to participate in the trials.

On average, around 150,000 eligible voters per ballot had the option to use electronic voting and up to 60% of voters made use of the system. This high turnout via the Internet proves that the new channel meets a genuine requirement, especially among our fellow citizens abroad, and enjoys a high degree of trust. This is not something that could have been taken for granted. When postal voting was introduced in 1992, it took several years before a comparably high level of acceptance was achieved.

Setting the course for the future

In the third report on electronic voting, the Federal Council has set the course for the future development of the project as part of its e-government strategy, i.e. the extension of electronic voting to all eligible voters, including those in Switzerland. The proven step-by-step approach based on the principle of "security over speed" will be continued. The cantons will only be able to increase the number of voters in Switzerland allowed to participate in the trials after new, more rigorous security requirements have been implemented.

The changes focus on the introduction of verifiability. This will enable checks to be carried out to verify whether the vote has been cast as intended and whether it has been submitted and counted correctly. This provides sufficient scope for the identification of systematic manipulation in

good time before referendum or election results are published while maintaining the secrecy of the ballot.

The Federal Council also wants to amend the legal bases for the implementation of electronic voting trials and the provisions in the ordinance on political rights. In addition the Federal Chancellery is issuing an ordinance setting out technical implementation provisions. Based on the new legal bases, the systems deployed will in the future be audited by an external body accredited by the federal government.

The Federal Council's third report on electronic voting is available on the Federal Chancellery's website and was published in the Federal Gazette in mid July:

www.bk.admin.ch > Politische Rechte > Vote électronique > Berichte und Studien

Information on the Wassenaar Agreement can be found at www.wassenaar.org

Changes at the Consular Directorate

**Jean-François Lichtenstern –
from Berne to Los Angeles**



For the past few years I have had a close relationship with the Swiss abroad. The congresses in Bordeaux and Lugano were bathed in sunshine, serving for me today as an illustration of the warmth radiated by the Swiss abroad. This radiance also extends to the preliminary draft of the Swiss Abroad Act, which I was involved in creating. I bid farewell today to our compatriots abroad, whom I served with great enthusiasm and who represent the vanguard of Switzerland's presence abroad. Many thanks to you all!

**Peter Zimmerli –
from Singapore to Berne**



I succeeded Jean-François Lichtenstern as the Delegate for Relations with the Swiss Abroad at the end of July. I am 56 years of age and grew up in the canton of Aargau. In addition to a spell in the Economic Affairs Section at headquarters, I have worked for the FDFA in Brazil, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Germany, Italy and Singapore since 1985. I am delighted to now serve as an intermediary between you and federal government. Together with my team, I will continue and build on the outstanding work of my predecessor and look forward to working closely with you.

**Andreas Maager –
from Berne to Atlanta**



After 25 years abroad with the FDFA, I returned to Berne in 2009 to take over as head of the Consular Protection Section. My involvement with the creation of the Consular Directorate, which officially commenced its activities in May 2011, began one year later. The FDFA placed me in charge of Swiss Citizen Services compris-

ing the Consular Protection Section, Citizen Services and Support for Representations, the helpline and the Swiss Emigration Service. My career journey continues in September when I will take up my new position in Atlanta, USA, where I will be head of the Swiss consulate general.

**Bruno Ryff –
from Los Angeles to Berne**



After being deployed in Europe, Asia, North and South America, I will take up a new position in my home town where I will be able to contribute my wealth of experience abroad. Together with an experienced team, I look forward to providing Swiss citizens abroad with comprehensive and efficient services and support tailored to individual requirements as far as possible.

Important notice

Inform your embassy or consulate general of your email address and mobile telephone number and/or any changes.

Register at www.swissabroad.ch to ensure you do not miss any communications ("Swiss Review", newsletters from your representation, etc.).

The latest issue of "Swiss Review" and previous issues can be read and/or printed out at any time at www.revue.ch. "Swiss Review" (or "Gazzetta Svizzera" in Italy) is sent to all households of Swiss abroad who are registered with an embassy or consulate general either electronically (via email and as an app for the iPad and Android Tablet PCs) or in a printed format free of charge.



Phone from Switzerland: 0800 24-7-365
 Phone from abroad: +41 800 24-7-365
 E-Mail: helpline@eda.admin.ch
 Skype: helpline-eda



Travel advice

www.eda.admin.ch/reisehinweise
 Helpline DFAE: +41 (0)800 24-7-365
www.twitter.com/travel_edadfae

itineris

Online registration for Swiss citizens
 travelling abroad

www.fdfa.admin.ch/itineris

Publications

50 Swiss faces in the Council of Europe



The FDFA has published a brochure to mark the 50th anniversary of Swiss membership. Fifty Swiss nationals talk about their work and experiences in one of the many committees of this intergovernmental organisation, which is the oldest in Europe and has the most members. The publication can be ordered free of charge in German, French and Italian at publikationen@eda.admin.ch or downloaded at www.eda.admin.ch/publikationen.

ELECTIONS AND REFERENDA

A referendum will be held on the following proposals on 22 September 2013:

- Popular initiative of 5 January 2012 "Yes to the abolition of compulsory military service" (BBl 2013 2471);
- Federal law of 28 September 2012 on combating communicable human diseases (Epidemics Act, EpG; BBl 2012 8157);
- Amendment of 14 December 2012 to the federal law on employment in trade and industry (Employment Act, ArG; BBl 2012 9655)

More information can be found on page 14.

All information on the proposals (voting pamphlet, committees, party information, e-voting, etc.) can be found at www.ch.ch/en/votes/

The final referendum date in 2013 will be 24 November.

POPULAR INITIATIVES

At the time of going to press, the following new federal popular initiatives had been launched (deadlines for the collection of signatures in brackets):

- "Freie Fahrt statt Mega-Staus" (Free-flowing traffic instead of congestion) (28.11.2014)
- "Strassengelder gehören der Strasse" (Road traffic charges belong to the road) (28.11.2014)
- "Ja zu vernünftigen Tempolimiten" (Yes to reasonable speed limits) (28.11.2014)
- "Ja zum Schutz der Privatsphäre" (Yes to protection of privacy) (04.12.2014)

The list of pending popular initiatives can be found at www.bk.admin.ch under Aktuell > Wahlen und Abstimmungen > Hängige Volksinitiativen.

FDFA OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER:
 PETER ZIMMERLI, RELATIONS WITH THE SWISS ABROAD
 BUNDESGASSE 32, 3003 BERNE, SWITZERLAND,
 TEL: +41 800 24-7-365
WWW.EDA.ADMIN.CH, EMAIL: HELPLINE@EDA.ADMIN.CH

Advertisement

swissworld.org
 Your Gateway to Switzerland

Little gems

Import and export in the Stone Age

In archaeology everything proceeds at a slightly less hectic pace than in normal life. In 1920, archaeologists discovered an ancient axe blade during a dig at Horw in the canton of Lucerne. However, news of this sensational find has only emerged now almost 100 years later. Researchers have proven that the axe blade dates to the period around 4000 BC. This means that the Horw copper axe is Switzerland's oldest metal find.

What is remarkable about the discovery is not just its age but also the fact that the axe was not produced in Switzerland. It was imported. It is



extremely likely that the copper comes from a mine in the Austria/Slovenia region. Archaeologists say that similar axe blades have also been found in eastern and northern Europe. Archaeologists also know that Switzerland did not have the expertise in metallurgy required for such production at that time. It was not until 3800 BC that Neolithic man in the region that is modern-day Switzerland

learned to make copper items for himself. At any rate, this provides clear evidence that our ancestors very early on developed a flair for import and export. (mul)



Murder with Swiss precision

Death is dreadful and murder horrifying except when it is a purely literary exploration of the human psyche. Even murder can then become enjoyable reading. In any case, in just under 300 pages a new title "Mord in Switzerland" (Murder in Switzerland) takes us into a dark world where murder is carried out with Swiss precision. It contains literary gems from 18 well-known Swiss authors.



The gruesome tales are written by Karin Bachmann in Biel, Anne Cuneo in Lausanne, Mitra Devi in Lucerne, Petra Ivanov in Kreuzlingen, Sam Jaun in the Jura, Milena Moser in Aarau, Peter Zeindler on Zurich's Gold Coast and Emil Zopfi in Glarus. The Swiss settings give the writing a touch of local colour. But that is actually incidental. The real discovery is the multifaceted picture that emerges when 18

authors conceive how evil manifests itself in a Swiss way. A bloodbath ensues. (mul)

"Mord in Switzerland", Petra Ivanov/Mitra Devi (Hrsg.), Appenzeller Verlag, ISBN 3-85882-653-7. Only available in German. CHF 28, EUR 24.30

Swissmakers online

A man returns to Switzerland after several years abroad. He suddenly feels like an immigrant or tourist in his new former homeland. He sees things that he previously never noticed or paid attention to. He is curious and constantly amazed. It was in these circumstances that the idea emerged for an English-language online magazine to share discoveries and experiences with those who have recently arrived in Switzerland but also with the Swiss abroad. The magazine entitled "Newly Swissed" is packed with fascinating facts and news items about the offbeat and unfamiliar. For exam-

ple, it contains articles on the film "Der Imker", the story of a Kurdish refugee in Switzerland, on stand-up paddle-surfing, a new trend in sport, on an opera performance in Pfäffikon and on how Switzerland is well on the way to becoming a Fort Knox for data storage. The articles all in English are well written and presented. The only downside is that readers could become so engrossed in what the magazine has to offer that they might spend too much time reading and exploring. (BE)

www.newlyswissed.com



Bulletins

Motion against tax agreement with France

The National Council has approved a motion seeking to prohibit third countries from levying taxes on property in Switzerland by 119 votes to 62, against the will of the Federal Council. The motion is directly aimed at France, which is calling for a new inheritance tax agreement with Switzerland. According to the agreement text, which has already been signed by Paris and Berne, inheritance is to be taxed in the country in which the heir lives and not – as was previously the case – in the country where the testator lived.

Swiss wine at Swiss embassies

Switzerland's representations abroad are to serve only Swiss wine at official events with immediate effect. The Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) has announced that a new concept regarding the consumption of wine entered into force on 1 June. The wine will now be purchased centrally by the FDFA, and embassy and consulate staff can order it directly from the warehouse for representation events. The FDFA has indicated that "a wide range of wines" is available.

Help with Council of the Swiss Abroad elections

The addresses of Swiss citizens residing abroad held by the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) may be used for the election of the Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA) in future. The National Council approved a mo-

tion on this matter during the summer session. Carlo Sommaruga, SP National Councillor and member of the CSA, initiated the motion in the Foreign Affairs Committee. The decision of the Council of States is still pending.

Lots more foreigners

There were 73,000 more foreign immigrants to Switzerland than emigrants in 2012 in net terms. Just under three quarters of them were EU/EFTA citizens. Immigration from EU states has increased significantly since the introduction of the free movement of persons accord on 1 June 2002. Net migration has since averaged 63,300 persons a year. In the period from 1991 to 2001, the migration balance in Switzerland stood at 26,400 persons a year. At that time, immigrants came almost exclusively from countries outside the EU area.

Special party conference on education

Toni Brunner, the SVP party president, says that schools in Switzerland do not meet his expectations or those of the Swiss People's Party (SVP). He told a special party conference on education in mid June that the emphasis today was placed on "wellness pedagogics" instead of achievement and discipline. The list of demands, which was adopted, includes having full-time not part-time class teachers, not starting foreign language lessons until secondary school and ridding elementary schools of "therapisation" by remedial teachers, psychologists and social workers.

Quotes

"I feel good (...) it feels good (...) I feel good."

Federal Councillor Johann Schneider-Ammann on Switzerland's free trade agreement with China, which has caused great concern, particularly among Swiss farmers

"Business must not just perceive society as an appendage."

Federal Councillor Alain Berset at a conference held by the Swiss mechanical and electrical engineering industries (Swissmem)

"Everything has been said before, but since nobody listens we have to keep going back and beginning all over again."

André Gide (1869–1951), French author and philosopher

"Before the crisis, banking confidentiality was sacrosanct and the automatic exchange of information the devil incarnate. Today, banking confidentiality is the work of the devil while the automatic exchange of information is the panacea."

Ruedi Noser, FDP National Councillor during Parliament's extraordinary session on tax compliance in Switzerland's financial centre

"I constantly wonder how a person of her stature – small body, large head – manages that."

SP Council of States member Hans Stöckli on Federal Councillor Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf and her marathon of meetings negotiating "Lex USA"

"There are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They make themselves manifest."

Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951), Austrian-British philosopher

"A story has been thought through to the end when it has taken the worst possible turn."

Friedrich Dürrenmatt (1921–1990), Swiss author



Under the slogan "Gymnastique fantastique", the Federal Gymnastics Festival took place in Biel and Magglingen from 13 to 23 June with 60,000 gymnasts, 17,000 of them young people, attending. STV Wettingen won the team competition, as it did at the 2007 Gymnastics Festival. In the artistic gymnastics contest, Giulia Steingruber won the women's event and Claudio Capelli from BTV Bern triumphed in the men's competition. They will each bear the title "Gymnastics Festival Winner" until the next competition in Aarau in 2019. Storms swept through the festival site twice and over 80 people were injured on 21 June.



Swiss National Park, Graubünden

Setting course for Graubünden.

Heading eastwards on a journey through the largest canton in Switzerland.

A region with fascinating contrasts

In the far east of Switzerland, the country's largest canton in terms of area is as fascinating for its cultural diversity – with three of the country's four official languages spoken here: Romansh, German and Italian – as it is for the variety of its landscapes: sheer and rugged in the north but becoming progressively more gentle the farther south you go. Home to the Swiss National Park, three UNESCO World Heritage sites and a paradise of panoramic trains, Graubünden must be on the itinerary for every traveller to Switzerland.

A kaleidoscope of wonder

It is here where you will meet the source of the river Rhine and the “Grand Canyon of Switzerland” that it has carved, where you can walk, climb, cycle and row like never before against a dream-like natural backdrop. Here, the mountain trains will take you across breathtaking viaducts. You might stumble across Heidi whilst roaming the pastures, admire the highest pinewood forest in Europe, wander through villages with houses delicately decorated with “sgraffiti”, and bathe in turquoise-coloured lakes surrounded by mountains. To round off a busy day, invigorating thermal waters will help you regain the energy needed to continue discovering everything that Graubünden has to offer.

An Alpine Eden

The oldest national park in the Alps (celebrating 100 years in 2014) offers an area of 170 km² for the alpine flora and fauna to thrive in freedom, and a magnificent observation point for its visitors. Don't miss the National Park Centre in Zernez.



Tip 1

MySwitzerland.com
Webcode: **B37658**

The Valley of Artists

Val Bregalia, south of Graubünden, is a paradise for hikers and climbers, but it is also a source of continuing inspiration for numerous artists. This idyllic valley is where the famous Alberto Giacometti spent his early years.



Tip 2

MySwitzerland.com
Webcode: **A147088**

A hotel at the summit

Overlooking one of the most spectacular panoramas in the Engadine/St. Moritz region, the Muottas Muragl hotel, situated at an altitude of 2456 m, offers a charming, stylish alpine design, a wide gastronomic range and fantastic excursions close by.



Tip 3

MySwitzerland.com
Webcode: **C58592**

Network Switzerland:

Hotel Staila Fuldera***, Fuldera

Register by 30 September 2013 at www.MySwitzerland.com/aso and win a 2-night stay for 2 persons at the Typically Swiss Hotel Landgasthof Staila*** in Fuldera for a memorable stay in Val Müstair.



MySwitzerland.com
Webcode: **A54633**

A collaboration between Switzerland Tourism and the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA)



Auslandschweizer-Organisation
Organisation des Suisses de l'étranger
Organizzazione degli Svizzeri all'estero
Organisaziun dals Svizzers a l'ester

Switzerland Tourism.
MySwitzerland.com

